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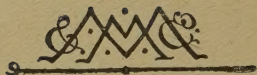
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Suffering, Punishment, & Atonement

*An Essay in Constructive Interpretation
of Experience*

By

Ernest W. Johnson, M.A.

TUTOR OF CHESHUNT COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE, FORMERLY SCHOLAR OF
PEMBROKE COLLEGE, OXFORD

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PREFACE

THIS Essay has grown out of a series of discussions in a circle of intimate friends on questions brought vividly before them by the War, and it represents the author's attempts to work through these questions and their Theological implications along an Empirical line of thought which he had before found fruitful. He owes thanks especially to two friends who read through the MS., Mr. M. E. Aubrey, M.A., who had taken part in the discussions, and Dr. Skinner, Principal of Westminster College, Cambridge. Both gave him the benefit of a kindly and appreciative though searching criticism of matter and of style. But neither must be held in any way responsible for the author's thought or for the way in which he has expressed it. He is himself only too conscious that the Essay might have been both sounder and more readable if he had been able to follow their friendly counsel.

One small point of detail. Readers of the last chapter who heard Dr. T. R. Glover's Lectures on The Jesus of History will perhaps be reminded of his treatment of Jesus' Parable of the Two

Debtors. If so, they will also surely recognise that the apparently flagrant borrowing of a phrase of Dr. Glover's was natural and inevitable. The author had no felonious intent, but, the word once heard, no substitute was possible.

CHESHUNT COLLEGE,
CAMBRIDGE, 1918.

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"Let empiricism once become associated with religion, as hitherto, through some strange misunderstanding, it has been associated with irreligion, and I believe that a new era of religion as well as of philosophy will be ready to begin."—WILLIAM JAMES.

INTRODUCTION

IN sending out these short studies on such great subjects I should like to make clear at the outset the limits of my purpose.

My own work and interest have for some time been mainly in the field of religion and theology. But these terms have never to me represented regions of experience or departments of study separated from the rest of life and of science. Rather, so far as I see them, all experience and all knowledge have a religious aspect and a theological bearing, *i.e.* they embody more or less clearly something of God's activity and our response, and they have a bearing on our knowledge of God and of the relations between God and ourselves, and this aspect and this bearing are to me of primary and of ultimate importance.

This discussion, however, is not by any means exclusively religious or theological. It is a humble attempt to see what light is thrown by our common experience upon some of our fundamental human problems and perplexities, not the problems and perplexities of to-day only, though to-day's troubles may accentuate our perplexities and distress of spirit, but the perennial problems and

Religious
interest

Not exclusively
religious
interest.

perplexities which come to all of us as we meet life's discipline, and especially when we have to take responsibility for the training of others.

Atonement a
human act as
well as divine.

Even atonement is not a matter that concerns the theologian alone. Its centrality in specifically Christian life and thought is generally admitted, but it bears on the deep human relations of man to man as well as on the relations of man to God. It would indeed be strange if what is generally considered to be the centre and source of Christian experience were found to be alien to the common human life and experience within which Christianity came into being.

Begin not with
Scripture,

So I propose to begin not with Revelation or Scripture. That line has been worked, faithfully and fruitfully, too often and too well to warrant me in going over the ground again in print. I am happy to believe that my conclusions are not inconsistent with Scripture.

nor with
religious
experience,

Nor do I begin with religious experience, though I have not the slightest reason or desire to ignore or distrust religious experience. To begin with either of these might preclude my thought being of any use to those, if any such read it, who cannot admit that the Bible as such has to them any authority, or religious experience of others any universal objective validity.

but with
common
experience,
God's school
for man.

I am the more content to start from the ground of common human experience because I have no doubt in my own mind that the world of our human experience is in the main and in a true

sense God's world, with its main lines planned by Him for the development and training of man's spirit. This at any rate, with all of good and evil that there is in the world, has been an actual result, and it can hardly be a chance result, whether our judgment about it be one of enthusiastic approval or of regret.

I. SUFFERING

CHAPTER I

IN these days of widespread suffering and profound distress, both of body and of spirit, the old problem of pain or suffering forces itself insistently upon the mind. Some answer the human heart demands to the inevitable question Why is all this allowed? What does all this mean? And while a detached academic discussion would be out of place and distasteful there is obvious need not only of courage and of sympathy but also of clear thinking.

The problem of pain or suffering is as old as the problem of evil and is sometimes confused with it, not only in the obstinate questionings of the stricken heart but in writings of philosophers who have less excuse for ignoring the essential distinction between pain and moral evil. Let us keep this distinction clear, and, isolating the lesser problem, that of pain or suffering, let us see whether common human experience has any light to throw upon it. If it has it will perhaps help to clear away some perplexities which have always tended to add the last poignancy to human sorrow and introduced

Problem of
pain

different from
problem of
evil.

gratuitous confusion into moral and religious thinking.

Definitions.

For convenience let us keep the word 'pain' for suffering that is mainly physical, and use 'suffering' as the wider term, including all degrees of mental or spiritual distress, whether accompanied by physical pain or not.

Pain older than humanity.

Pain is far older than the human race. Probably there has never been any human experience free from it. But in itself it does not necessarily raise any special problem. Man soon accustoms himself to the customary, and only seeks practical means to deal with it. The pressure of the atmosphere doesn't trouble our minds. But when the unaccustomed happens man asks why. And when suffering unusual either in extent or intensity has happened to an individual or to a community there seems to be an instinctive tendency in the human

Assumed to be God's punishment.

mind to look upon it as being more or less directly and of set purpose inflicted by whatever powers, other and greater than human, are conceived of as acting and ruling in the world. And the infliction will be interpreted as arising out of caprice or malignity, or by way of punishment for some offence against these powers, according to the character assigned to these powers. Some would say that the character attributed to these powers in the main reflects the dominant characteristics of the people, idealised and personified. But be that as it may, the tendency to attribute special sickness or disaster to divine displeasure and treat

it as divine punishment for sin is seen in Homer's heroes, in Job's friends, in the ordinary Jews of Christ's days, as well as in primitive folk of all periods. It persists to-day, not only among the uneducated and superstitious, but among our most serious and high-minded people.

And the tendency is not due to baseless superstition, nor is the instinctive recourse to penitential prayer in face of calamity unwholesome or unreasonable. Far from it. Beyond all question there is the closest connection between sin and suffering. Much of the pain and suffering in the world of men is clearly the result of human wrongdoing. Nor will any Christian at any rate deny that the fear of God and obedience to His will is one of the greatest preservatives of health and well-being, both in the individual and in the community, and one of the most efficacious preventives and cures for human pain and suffering.

The assumption is natural.

Pain and sin are closely connected.

More than this, pain has always been used by all rulers, whether in the family or in the school or in the larger communities such as the State, as a more or less effective instrument in the training of the young and in the repression of evil-doers. Nature herself seems to have relied largely on this means through the countless ages of the evolution of species. What wonder if the familiar use of pain as punishment and the genuine religious instinct to meet suffering with self-examination, if not self-accusation, have helped minds none too severely logical to pass more or less consciously from the indisputable experience that all punish-

Men use pain for discipline.

ment is painful to the unwarranted inference that all pain is punishment ?

'Law,' two
senses.

Yet another cause has doubtless contributed no little to the confusion of thought about pain and punishment, quite apart from primitive instinct and the religious tendency to self-abasement. 'Natural Law' is a modern enough conception, and of the greatest importance and value in Natural Science, in Ethics, and in Philosophy; and we are often warned of the trouble that is apt to come from the ambiguity of the term 'law' in philosophical argument. But it is astonishingly difficult, not only in common speech but in serious discussion and writing, to keep 'law' in the sense of 'description of the ways in which things *do* happen' quite distinct from 'law' in the sense of 'command' or 'statement of the way in which things *ought* to happen.' We see a man following vicious courses and suffering pain in consequence, and we are quite likely to say he has 'broken' a 'law of nature' and is being 'punished' accordingly; and the moral drawn is probably a perfectly sound and wholesome one, and most healthy minds feel that the 'punishment' is just and wise and the moral order of the universe thereby vindicated. But the ambiguity of the term leads to confusion nevertheless. As a matter of fact the wrongdoer has 'broken' no law of nature: that no man can do. He has broken perhaps many laws of right conduct, human or divine or both, and he is suffering the consequences, perhaps at the hands of men, most

Natural law
not breakable.

certainly at any rate in the course of nature, and we may say also, and therefore, at the hands of God. But, in the proper scientific sense of the term 'law of nature,' he has simply *exemplified* one or many of such laws. Whether he knew the laws or not, whether he would have cared about them had he known them, he acted in a certain way and certain consequences followed, quite irrespective of his will ; that was the nature of things, inevitable except by special miraculous intervention,—in accordance with the will of God, the Christian feels obliged to say.

So far there is no difficulty. The man has broken not the law of nature but the law of right conduct, the law of man or the law of God, or both, and he suffers in consequence. He has disregarded the laws of health, which say not that he must live healthily but that if he wishes to be healthy he must live in a certain way and avoid certain courses to which his evil desires tempt him. So far as he has scientific knowledge he doesn't complain of the pain he has to bear—he knew the risk,—and so far as he is a just man he will recognise that the suffering in mind, in reputation amongst his fellows, in his own self-esteem, however painful, is the result of his own act. It is, he may well feel, 'penalty' which he ought to have foreseen even if he didn't foresee it or if he hoped somehow to escape it.

But the trouble doesn't end here. Men cannot isolate themselves either in their wrongdoing or

Natural law
'punishes' sin

and innocence
alike.

in their suffering. It is not only the vicious man that suffers pain in his own body, and shame and loss socially and spiritually, but others suffer too, partners of his sin in varying degrees of ignorance and of guilty responsibility, and possibly, what is worse, entirely innocent victims of his wrongdoing and inheritors of his pain and shame.

Indiscriminate
as regards
guilt.

This common and indisputable fact of experience it is that has made the human heart cry out not only in sorrow but often in hot anger and revolt. I have used language applicable most naturally to sins of the flesh, a type of wrongdoing and of suffering where the connection between the wrong and the suffering is patent, but there are many cases where the connection is more subtle and the suffering less appalling and yet, if the suffering is to be considered as punishment, its incidence is baffling to the moral sense of mankind. Great suffering is now being caused by the operations of war, but no one can pretend to think that the suffering that comes to individuals or nations is in any way proportionate to the amount of guilty responsibility each may have for what is wrong in the war, in its inception or in its destructive course. Indeed, quite generally, it may be admitted that while suffering is undoubtedly attached to wrongdoing it is not possible to trace any exact or even roughly proportioned correspondence between the amount of wrongfulness in the act and the amount of suffering that results to the wrongdoer.

Hence
appearance of
injustice

To some minds this is one of the most cogent

arguments for immortality, that there must, if God is just, be another life in which the inequalities and apparent injustices in regard to suffering in this life shall be redressed. Certain it is that if we are to trust our human experience and sense of justice in this matter there seems to be something lacking in the general scheme of things, if pain is looked upon as punishment. Even the most primitive or the most corrupt of human governments must, in the main, aim at making punishment fall on the guilty and not let it fall indiscriminately on guilty and innocent alike; must also discriminate between degrees of guilt and try to make the punishment fit the crime; must, finally, distinguish offences committed in ignorance from wilful wrongdoing. But these are just the ways in which the incidence of suffering, if it is to be considered as punishment, seems to fall often and flagrantly short of an ordinarily decent standard of human justice, much more short of a divine standard.

Now mystery there may be and probably always will be, to our limited intelligence, about the dealings of God with man. There is and will always be room and need for a faith that goes beyond sight. But we have no right, nor is there need, to rest content with a mystery which leaves attributed to God's moral government of the world an inequality, an indifference to the elementary demands of human justice, which would not be tolerated even in the most backward of human communities or the most outrageous of human

even by
human
standards.

The theory of
suffering at
fault.

tyrannies. A theory which leads to such a disturbing and distressing result must surely be faulty if not false. Surely a better interpretation of experience is possible, more true to the facts and to our sense of justice, more just to God and to the moral order of the world which we say He has made.

What are the main functions of suffering ?

Let us then try to see, in a comprehensive view of human experience, what seem to be the primary and most obvious functions of pain and suffering in the history and present working of the world.

Three functions of suffering :

I find three such main functions, corresponding to three great stages of human development and to three great departments or aspects of human life and experience. Let us call them respectively

in the sense world,

(1) The *life-preserving* function, concerned mainly with the preservation and maintenance of the physical life of man, the life of sense, which he shares with the animal world out of which he seems to have come.

in the thought world,

(2) The *mind-quicken*ing function, concerned mainly with the development of the intellectual life of man as he strives to understand and control nature for the preservation and enrichment of human life.

in the moral world.

(3) The *soul-testing* and *soul-strengthening* function, concerned with the development of the moral and religious life of man as he seeks not only to know the world but to do the right and follow the ideal, which to him expresses the nature and the will of God.

This division does not pretend to be exhaustive, nor is it suggested that these functions belong exclusively to the different stages, or that these stages and departments of human experience are mutually exclusive. The physical life, the life of sense, is the starting-point and basis of all human life as known to us, and, however great the intellectual and moral development built upon it, the physical remains its basis and support, the medium of its expression and intercommunication. The physical and intellectual life furnish the material upon which the moral and religious life exercises itself and so gives worth and moral meaning to the whole. The moral and religious life has no meaning except as a quality given to the life of the mind as it works and expresses itself in its activities among men and in the material world of nature. But we have a convenient order—‘First the natural; then that which is spiritual.’

(1) First then in the sense life of the body, which Pain in the physical life man shares with the lower animals. Here the most outstanding fact about pain is that it is nature's signal of warning to sentient creatures against things and actions that are dangerous to life. We can of course only reconstruct in imagination the long process of evolution, but it is fairly clear that if pain had not acted in this way, *i.e.* if pleasure had not been attached on the whole to actions conducive to life and pain to actions tending to endanger and depress life, the process of evolution would never have been carried

through. If careless, aimless movement among hard and sharp things had not led to painful consequences, if starvation and disease had been pleasant and the common avenues to death painless, the human race might never have come into existence or might never have survived. The pain of hunger has been one of the great saving powers of the world against famine and disease, to say nothing of its use in counteracting inertia and sloth. Even now, with all our knowledge, but for the pain attached to indigestion and other consequences of ignorance, carelessness, and excess, most of us might have killed ourselves by over-eating or over-drinking before we arrived at years of discretion.

Pain the guard
of animal life,

And this function pain has performed, presumably, through all the long ages of development before man, self-conscious and moral, came into being, that is, before any use of it as punishment could have any place or meaning. In fact it may be said to have worked more efficaciously where we generally assume there was no consciousness of an ideal, no law of the ideal, and therefore no breach of the law, no sin; where instinct is supposed to have ruled, without knowledge, without question, automatically. Whatever advantages in other directions have come to man from self-consciousness and reflection, from conscience and the moral law, it is generally taken for granted that these things have not brought him greater perfection in the bodily functioning as compared, let us say, with that of the bee or of the tiger.

and beneficent.

But whatever may be the relative effectiveness

of instinct and reason in the physical life this function of pain seems to have been, and to be still, very important, very valuable, and on the whole beneficent. It seems to work mainly with an eye to the future, by way of warning, stimulus, and guidance, to save sentient creatures from the worst dangers to which they have been exposed.

Let me here meet two possible difficulties.

(a) If it be objected that the pains of physical decay and death can have no forward-looking use to the individual sufferer it need only be said here that actual death comes but once to every living creature. We saw before that if the ordinary avenues to death were painless there would have been a great risk of the course of evolution coming to an end long ago. The function of pain in the bodily life may still be on the whole beneficent even though to every life there comes a time when it can no longer respond to the warning stimulus. It is no part of the purpose of this paper to prove that pain is not painful or that death is a pleasant process. It only wants to get a just understanding, in due perspective, of the use and function of pain. However painful death may be, there may be good reason for it in the whole nature of things. But with that we are not here immediately concerned. It is enough if here we see good reason for not assuming that pain, whether in the course of life or in the hour and article of death, is in itself evil or to be looked upon as a mark of divine displeasure.

Death painful
and not
forward-
looking,

but not
necessarily evil
or punishment.

Retributive
punishment
looks backward.

(b) The other difficulty is that of retributive punishment, which seems to point in a direction directly contrary to what has been suggested as the essentially forward-looking function of pain. Human rulers at any rate do frequently inflict pain deliberately by way of penalty for past wrongdoing, and sometimes with good effect.

But this also is
remedial ;

otherwise
useless.

As the following paper will deal with the subject of punishment it must be enough to say here that whatever good effect retributive punishment may have, it can in the nature of things be good only to creatures of some intelligence, capable of memory and reflection, and with some element of freedom in choice and action, that is, to minds capable of learning by experience. To other creatures, if such there be, it could have neither meaning nor use. There is clearly enough a natural instinct to strike a blow at any thwarting of one's will or at any infliction of pain on oneself or on one's friends, and there is much value in the instinct, as we shall see later. But the common intelligence and conscience of mankind has decided against any such entirely backward-looking, merely retaliatory and retributive use of punishment, and, in man's dealings not only with his fellows but with the animals under his control, requires for the justification of the infliction of pain some forward-looking purpose.

All civilised human law seeks to justify punishment, even apparently retributive punishment, as having in view the vindication of law and justice, for the well-being of the community if not of the

offender himself; and the Christian conscience is not easily satisfied unless it can see also in punishment something remedial as well as deterrent. Otherwise the retribution comes to be not so much vindicatory as vindictive.

These objections therefore do not seriously weaken the position that so far as the maintenance of the physical life is concerned, in a material world in which organic bodies come into being, do their work in the order of things and then die, pain inflicted by man and pain in the ordinary course of nature is mainly forward-looking, warning, corrective in its operation, tending to preserve the life from injury and destruction, at any rate from destruction before in the natural order of things the organism has completed its work. Nature seems to have provided, not absolutely but effectually enough for her purpose, that whatever tends to interfere seriously with the working of the organism, *e.g.* the intrusion of such things as sharp instruments or deleterious acids, the prevalence of conditions and the indulgence in actions inimical to life, should by the consequent pain give warning of the danger and stimulate to its removal. This has worked and still works well, and on the whole beneficently. The very painfulness of pain is what makes it most effective to this end.

Pain on the whole preservative and beneficent.

CHAPTER II

The life of the
spirit,

(2) But man is not only a body with a physical life to maintain and to pass on. His nervous system would seem to have been organised for other ends, at any rate it serves other ends, over and above the important one of helping him to avoid injury and premature destruction of the body. He has other sensations beside those of pleasure and pain, other judgments and other reactions to make on his sensations beside instinctive desire or aversion. By his power of discrimination and comparison, of reflection and idealisation, out of or by means of his sensations as they come to him from his contact with the world of nature and of men he has built up a whole internal world of thought and knowledge, a world which has absorbing interests of its own, ideals, fascinations and rewards of its own, whose values cannot be expressed in terms of physical life only or measured by merely bodily pleasures and their corresponding pains.

This is the world of the spirit (using the term not with any special religious significance but in its widest sense as broadly antithetical to the physical and as including the mental or intellectual,

the emotional, and the moral elements in human life). Each man with the help of his fellows constructs this inner world of thought for himself and lives his own inner life among his fellows. And though the content and material of the spirit life is, we suppose, largely common to all men, and their life more or less similar at the various stages of development, there are also great differences both of content and of the use made of this content according to the activities of the individual spirit. If each human body is different from every other and yet each one is largely dependent upon his fellows for his life, its maintenance and its well-being, still more is each human spirit different from every other both in the content of its world and in its activities therein, and yet each one is wonderfully dependent upon other spirits for the expansion and organisation, the quantity and the quality, so to speak, of its life.

individual yet
social.

It is unnecessary to enlarge upon the wonderful way in which man has by thought and knowledge extended his activities and enriched his life. It is clear that the advantage civilised man has over the lower animals and over the primitive savage lies not in greater sensibility of the separate bodily organs. A dog may have keener scent, a bird keener eyesight, and many animals are swifter and stronger than he ; but he outdoes them all in the co-ordination of the reports his severally inferior senses bring him. The instinct of the insect or of the animal may be less apt to err in providing for

An extension
and enrichment
of life.

Mind adds to
power of body.

the bodily needs of the individual or of the race, but man has developed a power of thought, comparison, and judgment, which in the long run has uses and values far beyond instinct. To overcome his physical limitations he has devised tools, instruments, and apparatus of all kinds, by which he gathers the material of his life, both physical and intellectual, from the ends of the earth. All space and all past time he ransacks for things and ideas that will serve his purpose. To-day he works his will in all parts of the earth, on and under the sea, even in the air, and he shapes his path by forecast of the future from a survey which embraces all the course of nature and of history in its scope.

Mind extends
range of
sympathy.

And it is not only by knowledge of external nature and the consequent control over nature that man has extended his activities and enriched his life. This knowledge he could never have acquired in isolation. One most potent means for the extension and enrichment of thought and knowledge is the expression and communication of thought by means of language and other material means and symbols. And this capacity for impressing his thought and purposes upon his fellows and receiving similar impressions from them has not only increased the common stock of knowledge. It has enabled men individually to enter into relations of sympathy and understanding with one another, and made possible the establishment of a solidarity in and between natural groups such as families and nations which goes far beyond natural

instinct and physical kinship, and leads to the formation of world-wide associations whereby life generally is much enriched and the extension not only of knowledge but of all good purposes is most effectually advanced.

Let us notice that the life in this spiritual world, while different from the physical life of the body in the external world of which it is a part, is by no means wholly separate from it or alien to it. We have no actual experience of the life of the spirit apart from the body and the external world. These seem to provide its starting-point, its basis and support; they constitute the sphere of its activities and the medium of its self-expression. Divinest conceptions of truth or beauty, sublimest thoughts and emotions, can only be expressed by material means, only communicated from spirit to spirit by spoken or written word or by other significant or symbolic act. And in all its flights of thought and aspiration the spirit has ever to return, not only for means of expression but for adjustment, correction, and confirmation, to the actual external world within which it works, which it sets itself to interpret and to use. Even in the internal world and the life of the spirit man walks securely only as he plants his feet firmly and intelligently on mother earth.

Yet by and in this inner life of the spirit man has not only extended and enriched his life through his increased understanding and use of the material world for his purposes. He has also with increase

Spirit life has
physical basis.

Gives control
of natural
instinct.

of the spiritual element in life attained through control of his own instincts and natural impulses some measure of freedom from the domination of the material and the physical, at any rate some freedom from the domination of pleasure and pain. This has an important bearing on our question, the function of pain and suffering.

Spirit enlarges
man's self,

All this extension and ramification of the lines along which a man can act and be acted upon, this increased solidarity with his fellows made possible by the great development of intercommunication, constitutes as it were a wonderful prolongation of his nervous system, an expansion indeed of his personality. His organism has, so to speak, extended itself in its activities throughout the world of space ; his experiences, his loves and his aversions, reach back into the infinite past, his purposes and his desires reach forward into the future without limit. For good or for ill the self whose life he would preserve and pass on is a larger and more organised self. He is apt to 'think in continents' and to dream of world domination, whether it be for his own glory now or for his nation's glory in days to come, or whether it be for the glory of God and the extension of His eternal kingdom.

so enlarges
possibility
of pain.

And in this enlarged life the pleasure and pain element will also be widely extended and more highly organised. The multiplication of points of contact with the world of nature and the increased sense of solidarity with the world of men,

further realisation of the past and extended forecasting of the future, while they give more possibilities of pleasure and of the satisfaction of desire inevitably give more avenues of possible trouble. The more complex an organism, be it individual or group, the more ways are there in which its working can be hampered ; this is part of the price it has to pay for its greater powers of self-adaptation. So the human organism, growing more complex as the spiritual element increases, finds with greater opportunities of activity also extended possibilities of suffering. The body remains, the physical basis and starting-point of this larger life, and its pains are still felt and will fulfil the same function as before. But the whole world of spirit built upon this physical basis not only extends the feeling and function of pain but has its own possibilities of mental suffering, which may be internal and profound, quite independently of physical pain.

¶ Mental suffering is a product of the power of imagination. It may be described as a feeling of pain as the mind represents to itself some painful experience, past, present, or expected, of the personal individual self or of some other person or persons with whom the self has identified itself. It is common enough, however difficult it may be to describe. It arises most commonly perhaps and in its simplest form as a natural extension of a painful bodily injury as it touches a mind which looks before and after, remembering past pain or anticipating continuance of the pain and other

Mental
suffering an
extension of
physical pain

painful consequences, or sympathising with others in their pains and apprehensions.

till ideal
element
outweighs
physical

But though mental suffering is commonly connected with bodily pain the connection is not a necessary one, and even where there is such causal connection there is no discoverable law of proportion between the bodily pain as cause and the mental suffering as consequent. There may be much pain of body without mental suffering, and there may be much mental suffering without pain of body. Not only is it quite possible for a man to suffer real distress of mind by reason of trouble which is purely imaginary, but many of the greatest troubles may be quite independent of bodily pain.

A man may meet a painful death with equanimity, even with joy, who would suffer the acutest distress at a cold word from a friend or unworthy conduct in one he admired. So packed with meaning may be the simplest symbol or symbolic act that a traitor's kiss may be an abiding shame of the world, a permanent and even dominant element in the universal drama of sin and sorrow, and the eating of a morsel of dry bread together by a small company of like-minded folk may be the occasion of the greatest human exaltation and initiate a movement that may turn the world upside down.

beyond all
comparison.

In fact we can assign no limit to the extent, the depth, the meaning and the value, of the 'ideal' element in life, that life of the mind or spirit which

builds itself up and organises itself on the basis of the body and the external world. It is still in our experience always connected with the physical, starting from it, as we have seen, and coming back to it for expression, correction, confirmation and verification, but transcending it as spirit transcends the material medium through which it works and expresses itself, as spiritual reality transcends the symbol it uses, as the drama transcends the stage and its scenery and apparatus as end transcends means.

And as this ideal element increases in the experience of the race and of each individual member of the race, increases not only in extent, in quantity, so to speak, as compared with the physical, but also in relative weight and value, we notice two lines of development which are important for our present enquiry.

(a) The scientific understanding of the external world has given to man great power of control over nature. Increase of knowledge does not of itself either increase or lessen the actual pain and suffering of the world. Man may sometimes for some reasons use his knowledge and control to increase the causes of suffering. But it does increase his power over the natural conditions of pain and suffering, his knowledge of causes and effects. And normally he will be disposed to use this power to combat the pain and suffering which affects him and his ; This leads normally to decreasing of pain and the wider his sympathies the more will he be stimulated to his utmost endeavours in an in self and in wider self

incessant universal warfare against the causes of human suffering. Even if he does not do this consciously, and may be chiefly concerned in meeting his own needs and desires and those of his family, yet the whole work of the world is directed in the main to the securing of what man needs for his being and for his well-being and to the avoidance of the ills incidental to human life. And in this constant conquest of nature each plays some part and contributes his effort for the good not only of himself but of all.

and so to
quicken-
ing of sympathy
and love.

And here, in the common labour for the utilities of life, there can be no doubt that while knowledge gives understanding and command of the conditions and instruments of man's control of nature, *the* great stimulus and motive, *the* great guide and corrective, in the activities of the mind as well as of the body, is the same natural and instinctive desire to do away with or to lessen pain and suffering, present pain, painful remembrance of the past and pain anticipated in the future, and all other causes of suffering, one's own and others', all whose welfare can be guarded and increased by the love and foresight of to-day. Whatever other functions pain and suffering may have, there is no doubt about this function. The greatest of all incentives to human activity of mind and body, the primary quickener of human intelligence in its pursuit of knowledge, is undoubtedly human pain and suffering, past, present, and expected, as it is met by human thought broadened and deepened by human sympathy.

(b) The second effect of the great increase of the ideal element in experience seems at first to point in the opposite direction. If greater understanding gives control of the conditions of suffering, and knowledge tends normally to a lessening of the actual suffering in the world, there also shows itself with greater understanding a power of ignoring pain and suffering, not from insensibility but from a more intelligent appreciation of relative values of the things men desire and seek after.

But also to
ignoring of
pain for
high ends

This is a matter of first-rate importance in the development of the human spirit, of the human personality. The ultimate aim of all human education and discipline may be said to be to make men capable of discerning justly the essential meaning and the values of the various objects presented to the mind, willing to choose the things of highest value as the ends of their activities, and persistent in the pursuit of these highest ends in spite of all difficulties and discouragements. A man only becomes truly man when he passes from the stage of natural and instinctive reaction against pain which characterises the lower animals as well as himself, from the simple impulse to avoid what is painful and dangerous to the animal life, to the power of understanding this pain or suffering in relation to its causes and effects, what it means to himself and to others; to the capacity for estimating justly the value of ideal ends affecting others beside himself, with a judgment unbiassed by the feeling or anticipation of suffering.

and
understanding
of higher ends

Then and then only does he attain a real freedom

of judgment and of choice between alternative motives, purposes, and ends, real self-direction, which is the glory and the responsibility of man. Then he not only feels but he can discriminate between his feelings, and so master them—if he will ; he not only has acquaintance with the world, but he can estimate its value and so can be lord of it, to use it or reject it ; he not only knows himself, his desires, his needs, and his limitations, but he can overpass them by making them serve the highest purpose that he knows.

CHAPTER III

(3) This has brought us to the third and the most important aspect of life, and, with it, to the third main function of suffering. Pain in the
Moral world

Man is not only a body with physical life to maintain and pass on, and there is more in the inner world of mind than an extension and enrichment of human life by knowledge of the external world and by the power of communicating his thought and feeling and so entering into the life of his fellows. Among the judgments he comes to pass upon his own actions and those of his fellows, among the ideal ends between which he discriminates when he determines what course of conduct he shall pursue, there is one type of judgment, one end and standard of conduct, that comes to be pre-eminently important in human life. That is the moral end, the moral judgment, dealing with that aspect and quality of human action, conduct, and character, to which we apply the terms good and bad, right and wrong. This arises only when and so far as man has attained an ideal standard of judgment and some measure of freedom of choice in accordance with it. It comes eventually to apply to all human action, of body and of mind. It is not an

most
important
of all.

Not an
extension of
intellectual,
but a side of
all life

for which he
is responsible.

The meaning
of Character,

extension of the bodily and mental life, as the mental was of the bodily, so much as it is an aspect of the whole, constituting the form or quality of the whole, the main element in the value of the whole. The life of the body, extended and enriched by the activity of mind, gives the material, so to speak, the content of man's personality. His moral activity, his moral choices, are his own reaction upon this material in the light of his ideals and standards, reaction that gives shape, tone, or quality to that material. It is in respect of his use of the material, the shape he gives to it, the quality he impresses upon it, according to the ends he adopts and the unification of his life in the pursuit of those ends, that he is finally judged as a man. For this only is he rightly praised or blamed, because for this only is he really responsible. His physical life is, in its main features, given to him. His temperament, like the colour of his hair or skin, he is not responsible for. Even his mental powers and the mental pabulum presented to him for his spiritual nutriment, these are the 'given' elements of his experience. For them others are more responsible than he is, to begin with. His part at first is to receive, then to understand as far as he may, and as he understands he comes to discriminate and select and to make response according to whatever standard he may have come to form, largely at the suggestion of others. As his understanding advances his responsibility also for his standard and his choices increases. Finally, according to his choices and his responses in judg-

ment and in action, his character becomes formed, takes on a certain quality, for which he is judged ; and the character, made up of choices and acts and habits, tends in turn to give its own quality to his choices and acts as they come to be made.

But there is no fixity or necessity about character. It is subject to modification, change of form and quality. In this world of infinite variety, external and internal, there will always be, while life lasts, possibility of new experience and of new thought about it. New objects of knowledge and of desire, new ideas and ideals, suggestions from the world of nature and from other spirits, tend to modify old standards of judgment. Or if standards of thought remain unchanged the spirit may let its energies flag, allow use and wont to dull its realisation of ideals, till its active response is weakened, its unity and its vigour impaired. There is always the possibility of letting slip past gains, of weakening faculty by disuse. The 'vis inertiae' does not belong only to matter. It is one of the most powerful forces with which the human spirit has to contend.

Its mark
is freedom.

Action in
spite of
vis inertiae.

As the physical life of an organism is an activity, and is only maintained by unceasing conflict against the forces of destruction, and as the life of the mind is an inner activity of thought, feeling and will, so, in the moral life of the spirit, goodness or virtue is not a possession but a quality of spiritual action. A man does a good or virtuous act when he freely chooses the right, and we call a man good

or say he has a good character when he has formed good habits generally, that is, when he tends generally to choose freely and pursue steadfastly the best course open to him, in accordance with a good ideal.

Habit.

But one good act does not necessarily entail a second. Even in the case of a good habit, or the combination of good habits in a good character, there is nothing mechanically calculable about the continuous succession of acts and their quality. A habit, a character, is a tendency resulting from free acts. But, what free acts have made, free cessation of these acts or free acts of a different quality can unmake. Man is not the mere creature of his own habits any more than he is the mere creature of heredity or environment. He touches the infinite, with boundless possibilities of truth and error, beauty and squalor, of love and selfishness, goodness and evil. Ever and everywhere he is exposed to the solicitations of the lower nature, and at the same time to the promptings and inducements to a better life, with the constant necessity for choice and decision. And on the decisions hang character, judgment, his own and others', and destiny. All this we must here assume. There are good reasons for assuming it. If we cannot assume it nothing else is worth arguing about, and suffering and virtue alike have neither serious meaning nor value.

The 'good will'
the only good.

But now, if this is the nature of the moral life; if the moral end, so difficult to attain, so surpasses all other ends that "nothing in the whole world,

or even outside of the world, can possibly be regarded as good without limitation except a *good will*”; then the shaping and the perfecting of this good will, the instructing and the strengthening of the human spirit so that it see clearly the right, the ideal, and respond to it unwaveringly in its judgments, choices and actions, is the supreme end of human life and experience. There may be other ways of describing this supreme end, but the substance of it, in at any rate one important aspect of it, is here. Our immediate concern now is to see what part suffering plays in this work.

So far as the moral life is an aspect of the whole life of man, mind and body, as he lives in the world of nature and of man, pain and suffering will have the functions we have seen exercised there, *i.e.* they will warn him of dangers to the life and well-being of himself and others, and guide and stimulate him in efforts to combat these dangers. And the more the spirit is moralised the more effectually will this function be fulfilled. The effect of greater moralisation will be amongst other things increased sensitiveness to the sufferings of others, clearer insight into the causes of suffering, and more self-control and perseverance in the efforts to combat them.

But with the development of the moral life two new elements become prominent in the matter of suffering. A new kind of suffering and a new function of suffering. The characteristics of the moral life that stood out most plainly were, first,

and new *use*
of suffering.

its supreme importance, the unique value of goodness, of the good will; then, its mutability, the difficulty of attaining and giving permanence to goodness. Out of the unique value and worth of goodness to human life grows a corresponding *kind* or quality of suffering, caused by the absence of this goodness. Out of the insecurity of goodness in human life and character emerges a new *use* for suffering; to test and exercise, to confirm, purify, and, so far as may be, fix the good will.

Suffering of
sin and
alienation.

To the moral spirit which has learned to discriminate between the ideal ends that make claim on its allegiance, especially if and so far as it has gained any conception of that high ideal of human life which is contained in the Christian revelation of Jesus, which we may describe as holy love, there comes a source and a power of suffering beside which bodily pain, its own or others', and other suffering in the shape of ordinary loss and disappointment, is as nothing. As a matter of fact a great part, the worst part, of ordinary human pain and suffering does come from human wrongdoing. And the general human warfare against this suffering and its causes the Christian instructed conscience and will shares in with at any rate no less vigour than other men. Christian love, sensitive to the sufferings of others, has been one of the greatest moving, mind-quickenings forces in the fight against human pain. But the Christian conscience has a special suffering of its own, and the Christian will a special stimulus to the utmost

alertness and energy of conflict, in the wrongdoing, the sin, the evil will itself, apart from its painful consequences in the bodily and social life of men. The Christian knows it to be a disease and disorder of the will, which is in itself alienation from God and goodness. The cause of the trouble is again an alien enemy intrusion or attack, the claim of some false ideal to lordship, or else a slackening of vigour and effort within, the *vis inertiae* of the spirit, which, if allowed, means death,—from one direction or another the true life of the spirit is endangered.

Now it is a good thing that human wrongdoing does generally result in bodily pain and disorder of the life, individual and social. This tends to make men see the mischief and turn from it. Without the painful consequences we might never have learnt the wrongfulness or been stirred to combat it. Still better is it that with an instructed conscience the disorder of the will itself, the alienation from God and goodness, generally causes acute suffering to the spirit that yields allegiance to wrong. It feels the disorder and alienation worse than any other pain and suffering and is impelled at all cost to renewal of good will.

But sometimes serious spiritual evil has no immediate painful consequence in the external life to arrest the attention and sting the conscience to activity. Some of the most fatal diseases of the spirit lead to a moral insensibility and lethargy which make a man blind to his danger. Best of

Painful
consequence
of sin good,

so also the
pain of
alienation

which is felt
most by the
innocent.

all therefore about the suffering that comes from sin is that it falls not only on the sinner. It comes home most to the pure spirit that is most sensitively alert to the danger, most intensely active to save men from it, *i.e.* to the spirit of holy love. It alone is unerring in judgment and cannot be diverted by any moral dullness or indifference from full realisation of the mischief. It alone is unwavering in effort, undeterred by suffering, unhindered by slackness, in the conflict against wrong. This, I take it, is something of what the love of God in Christ means, and this is something of what God's will for man, the ideal of man, means, to which man is being called and led.

Suffering tests
and confirms
virtue,

Our last point. This perhaps gives us some insight into the last function of suffering. It is connected with the weakness of man's will for good in this highest of all activities of the spirit. The good thought and desire for the ideal don't of necessity harden into act, and then they do but form material for a fair building on a foundation of sand which is at the mercy of rain and storm. Virtue untried is pathetically insecure. Even a good habit apparently well tested may become a mere habit and taken for granted, and disaster may come with sense of security. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Virtue is virtue only in watchful activity. It is always more or less of a conflict, an overcoming of opposition within or without, a meeting of temptation, a resisting of evil—of the devil, if you like. The

conflict may vary in intensity but the resistance must be constant. Many can strike a blow, only the few succeed in a long war. For many who start in a long course, and can make an occasional spurt, few come through to the end. "Many are called, few are chosen." How can the good impulse be turned into a steadfast purpose, the feeble desire into a passion, the pious opinion into settled conviction, fair but frail innocence into tried goodness? How but by the discipline of pain and suffering?

We start out, if happy in our antecedents, with good intentions and high hopes. Right is to be our rule and end. Who knows the strength of the intention till pleasure and pain have done their best, or their worst? least of all do we know ourselves. Bodily nerve and muscle only get adjusted and kept fit by labour and much buffeting. So insight and will develope only with discriminating choices and perseverance in spite of difficulties. Love and goodness that cannot make sacrifice, or survive suffering for the sake of love and goodness, are thereby proved something lower, while every pain borne for the sake of love and goodness purifies and strengthens them.

Those who have borne most and learned their lesson have been most content with the discipline. It is significant of much that Jesus, whom all count the best of men, whom Christians believe was God incarnate, suffered, in body as all men may and in spirit as only the holy could suffer. In the working out of his purpose of holy redeeming love,

turns good
impulse and
instinct into
mature
steadfast will.

The case of
Jesus Christ

and his
followers,

and "for the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, despising shame," all that the sin and suffering of those he loved entailed and entails still to holy love. And those who have followed him most closely, even if they have not had to bear the same pain of body and could not bear the same spiritual burden, have been most ready to suffer, glad to be counted worthy to share in his sufferings, counting not their lives dear to them, reckoning that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to them-ward. So have they overcome the evil in their own hearts and led others along the same way of victory. If, as one writer says, 'it became him, for whom are all things . . . in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings,' it may well be so for others.

therefore
suffering still
beneficent.

If it is so we not only have a light upon a perplexing problem of theology but it bears out the suggestion of natural law that comes to us from our common experience of pain and suffering. In the moral and religious life we see pain and suffering playing the same beneficent part that they have played in the physical and mental life, and in addition to that they fulfil a still more important and glorious function in proportion as the moral activity and end is the most clearly and essentially god-like of all the activities and ends that man can pursue.

I have touched on these high moral and religious

subjects slightly, only so far as they affect the subject of our enquiry, the functions of suffering. It is enough for my purpose here if I have shown reason why we should not assume, as we have sometimes been apt to do, that suffering is in itself evil and that it is essentially punishment. It comes to men not in proportion to their wrongdoing but in proportion to their sensitiveness, and, in its more ideal forms, in proportion to their moral sensitiveness and the extent to which they enter sympathetically into the experience of others, that is, in proportion to their love of their fellows and their love of goodness, in other words, in proportion as their love is holy and their holiness a holiness of love. And the actual fulfilment of the functions of suffering depends, in a race which has any measure of freedom, upon the way suffering is met and turned to account. The functions of which we have spoken are rather possibilities and tendencies than necessary processes of natural law. How far man will understand and profit by them for the best ends depends on himself. Reflection on past experience suggests that suffering has played this part and may play this part in the future still more, not by necessity but by understanding and resolution. When once intelligence and freedom have come into being, they may much modify and hasten the subsequent course of evolution.

Suffering comes
most to
the best

and its value
depends on
the way it
is taken.

II. PUNISHMENT

THE USE OF PAIN AS PUNISHMENT

CHAPTER I

WE have discussed pain or suffering as such, and seen some of its function in the world of nature and of man. We noted that sometimes pain is deliberately used by man as punishment, and we reserved this matter for further enquiry, not only because of its intrinsic interest and importance in human experience, but because of its bearing upon ideals of human conduct and upon our conception of God's government of the world. Undoubtedly men do use pain as punishment and often justify this use on the ground that God, or Nature, so uses pain in the discipline of individuals and nations. We want to see how much of truth there is in this.

Definition.

What then is punishment, its function and its justification in the human and divine order, in the case of the individual and of the community? Let us define punishment, without begging the question as to its function, as the conscious infliction of pain or the withholding of pleasure because of wrongdoing.

We must not assume punishment by Nature.

We may not be agreed upon Nature as conscious, and with any other than conscious action we are not concerned. And there is the less need to make the assumption because if we think or speak of Nature as conscious, what we really mean is that God consciously acts in and through Nature. So we put aside the common assumption of God or Nature as 'punishing' wrongdoers, not because it is unfounded or because we have decided against it, but because this is just what we are wanting to investigate. We will let Natural Laws *be* Natural Laws, statements of the ways in which things do happen, not like human laws, which are rather statements of the ways in which we want things done or think they ought to be done, commands of 'Thou shalt' or 'Thou shalt not,' with certain penalties and sanctions attached for their enforcement.

What we are sure of is human use of pain as punishment. Let us see what this points to.

The use of pain inflicted as punishment is practically universal among men. It would seem to be general also among the higher animals, but as we cannot get into their minds and draw any hard-and-fast line between self-conscious, or reflective, and instinctive action we must put that whole field aside.

There are three conditions without which punishment would have neither use nor meaning. First, consciousness and power of learning by experience; then, a period of immaturity and growth long

Method.
Avoid petitio
principii.

Punishment
universal.

Its
conditions of
usefulness.

enough to give room for discipline and training ; lastly, some development of social habits and group action, *e.g.* of family and clan. At any rate in man, even in the earliest stages of development known to us, these conditions are present. The individual, out of relation to family and community, is unknown. There may be varying degrees of solidarity between the members of a family or community according to the conditions, especially the economic and military conditions, of the various human communities, but solidarity there is, more or less. Punishment is certainly a social growth, and the history of human punishment would be of great interest, especially if we could trace in it or with it the history of the fact and the sense of solidarity. It would give us at least one important aspect of the growth of human morality, both moral ideas and moral practice. Here we can only draw from the history of the race, and that epitome of the history of the race which each of us is said to pass through in our individual history, the outstanding elements of human nature concerned in punishment.

Its elements.

Retaliatory
instinct.

(1) There seems to be a primitive instinct, shared by man with other animals, not only to avoid pain but, when the pain comes from some one at all on one's own level, to hit back, to retaliate. If you can't get at the right person then it may have to be some one connected, who is more or less concerned in the aggression, at any rate so connected that the aggressor will in some way suffer and the aggrieved have, in his own eyes

and in the eyes of the community, some satisfaction. It is the instinct to 'give as good as he receives.' The instinct may work out faultily in all sorts of ways, but it has been on the whole a useful factor in the process of evolution. It has tended to act as a wholesome deterrent to wilful aggression within societies and between societies. Without such instinct aggressive egoism might well have run riot unchecked before the more social virtues, the milder elements of human nature, had had their chance to develop. It may have its use still.

Happily, in the evolution of human society, and of punishment as an instrument of government and discipline, man was not left to the operation of this instinct of retaliation as the sole positive check upon unlimited self-assertion. I would suggest at least two other important elements as coöperating with it and tending to modify it and to moralise and refine it.

Modifying
elements.

These are—(2) What I have referred to as the sense of solidarity in the social group of the family, clan, or state, which comes to take on, especially in the case of parents and child, a quality of tenderness which is an important element in moral relationship. This enlargement of the self which feels pain, requires protection, and is moved to retaliation, enlargement from the individual to the community and from the physical to the spiritual self, tends both to broaden the scope of the instinct and to refine it by personal discrimination and sympathy.

(1) Sense of
solidarity.

(2) Sense of justice.

(3) The sense of justice as proportion, balance, equivalence. This brings in the impersonal element of the ideal, and leads to the formation of a standard of judgment and of action somewhat independent of personal feeling and instinctive reaction, even those of the enlarged self.

¶ This does not in any way pretend to be a complete analysis even of the elements that enter into human punishment, but it is sufficient for our purpose.

Their primary nature.

Whether the retaliatory instinct is to be considered as identical with, or as an outcome of, the universal and primitive instinct of self-preservation; whether the sense of justice as balance and equivalence is also instinctive and as primitive as the instinct of retaliation and the sense of solidarity; whether it is primary or derivative, growing out of a calculation of self-interest or out of long continuance of settled government and experience of reprisals; and what part parental tenderness and solidarity of kinship have in the development of the sense of balance and the restraint on unlimited egoism;—all this we probably can never determine satisfactorily. And it does not matter that we cannot. The effectiveness and value of an element in a particular compound structure does not depend on the mode or order of its first appearance. These elements are present in *our* earliest experience and in the most primitive of human societies we know of or can imagine.

The root of law.

This instinct of retaliation, taken together with the modifying principles of natural affection and of

the sense of just equivalence, is one of the tap-roots of human society. It has persisted through human history, in the main unquestioned. It has formed the broad basis of human law and justice in all stages of civilisation, giving an acknowledged standard for the settlement of dispute between individuals of the same community and between different communities and states. There may be room for great differences of opinion as to what is fair equivalence in payment or compensation, but the equivalence once agreed upon and payment made, controversy is at an end. The sense of justice itself and human law and institutions for administering justice have developed and perfected themselves largely in the process of dealing with this instinctive action or reaction. It is this that affords the material and the motive power of justice and of the moral life generally, while civilisation and government by law are the forms given to it as men have succeeded in regularising it, making retaliation in the shape of punishment (1) more just, both in incidence, securing that it fall on the right person or persons, and in amount, 'making the punishment fit the crime,' and (2) more sure,—an exceedingly important element in practical administration, as it has always been found that inevitableness of detection and punishment makes actual punishment less necessary and far more effective for its end. Everything that has tended in any community, by way of care and impartial strictness in the administration of justice, to increased confidence in the justness and the certainty

The fruit of law.

its stability of it, has tended to stability in the habitual action of the individuals concerned and in the institutions of the community. And it is significant that what is felt by the common opinion of the community to be undue clemency, even though it be well-

its strictness intentioned and impartial, is apt to be as disturbing to this stability and confidence as undue severity. There seems to be a sort of satisfaction about equivalence of suffering that appeals to the average human wherever you find him—to the wrongdoer who is punished as well as to the injured person.

Where there is general confidence in the fairness, the impartiality, and the certainty of the judgment and of the punishment, men have grown content to give over their self-defence and self-vindication against wrongdoers to a code of laws embodying the sense of justice of the community and to an executive embodying the practical experience and the force of the community, even the offender acquiescing in the judgment and the punishment which he may have fondly hoped to escape. It is difficult to over-estimate the value to any community, small or great, be it family or state, of the possession of such a code of rules and such an administration. There is a firm foundation for further advance in moral sense and moral attainment as well as in outward and inward peace and prosperity.

its ethical value.

Limits of law
of equivalence.

But if this suggests a fascinating ideal of a continuous moral progress toward perfection of the

individual or of society by a gradual perfecting of law and the sense of justice the ideal has not been realised. Even the apparently simply conception of justice as the rendering to each man according to his deserts, so much pleasure for his good deeds and so much suffering for wrong done, has been found difficult of application. With the best of intentions it has not been easy either for benevolent despots or for self-governing communities in making and administering laws to arrive at that equivalence of reward or punishment that can satisfy the sense of justice of all concerned. The more complex the life of the individual and of the community becomes, and the more the ideal or spiritual element built on the physical and material basis outweighs the physical and material element, the more difficult does it become to assign to various rules and laws sanctions that will apply with any even rough equivalence to different individuals or classes of the community. There come to be great departments of life, some of the most important, in which law is altogether inapplicable except the law of public opinion or the law of the ideal and of the individual conscience.

Difficulty of
administration.

Even if these difficulties, of legislation and sanction and of administration, were overcome there remains a more radical defect in the whole system and conception of law and compulsion and punishment, a defect that becomes more apparent as law succeeds in restraining wrongdoing, inducing orderly law-abiding habits of life, and developing in the community a high standard of justice and

Limits of use
of all law and
compulsion.

of right conduct. Law may affect external conduct, overt acts. It may restrain from injurious deeds and words. It may on the positive side encourage and reward virtuous conduct in various ways. But it cannot enforce good will, cannot make men love goodness ; punishment cannot destroy ill will, cannot make men hate it and change it to good will. And after all this is the only absolutely good thing, the final purpose of all human institutions and education.

Spirit not
compellable.

This inability of law comes from the very nature of man as a spiritual being, the ground of his opportunity and of his peril, of his greatness and of his shame. It comes from the measure of freedom which makes him responsible, and a moral being. Wise foresight of parent or parliament may make the happiest arrangements for the child and the citizen, for the development of intelligence, the formation of good habits, and the guidance of the will. Law, custom, and public opinion may be so directed as to offer every discouragement to wrongdoing and every inducement to virtuous action. Temptations to evil may be reduced in number and intensity, and systems of reward and punishment perfected in refinement and accuracy of adjustment, and yet child and man alike may still choose the worse rather than the better, may follow a course of evil and draw others into it. Happily it is equally true that in the most untoward circumstances, and with a backing of evil habit, the child or man may by the

suggestion of some new thought to the mind be started on an upward course which no past history or present difficulty can check, and may draw others into like activity.

And this good and evil of choice and of the will sooner or later passes beyond the realm of law and outward conduct. Ultimately the character and quality of human activity is something which law and punishment, pain and pleasure at their highest power, may not be able to affect at all. It must be so by the very nature of spirit and spiritual goodness or virtue. Reward and punishment well adjusted are excellent aids to the development of virtue, especially in its early stages, but virtue which ultimately depended on these would not be virtue. It would be rather calculation of pleasurable results than love of right for itself. Further, untested by possible choice of evil, untried by temptation, unsifted by endurance of hardness for right's sake, virtue itself would lack the most important and valuable elements of virtue. It would not be permanent and secure.

Virtue implies freedom.

The spirit, to be really good, must see and understand good and evil so clearly, and so love the one and hate the other, that it chooses rightly and holds to its choice against all testing. This is the end to which all things move.

CHAPTER II

Yet law not
superfluous.

THEN is law and punishment superfluous? Is it not good? should we do as well or better without it?

Law leads up
to virtue.

No, this does not necessarily follow. And the chief reason why it does not follow lies again in the nature of the human spirit and human goodness and the way it comes into being. The final stage of virtue and its manifestations, in which the use of pain in human law and punishment seems to be unnecessary, is only reached actually, and is perhaps only possible, when there has been considerable development of intelligence and moral understanding, some attainment of that actual freedom of the will which comes with the discipline of life intelligently apprehended, whereby the spirit has learned to value, choose, and pursue the highest ideal ends irrespective of lower personal, selfish ends. In the earlier stages of intellectual and moral immaturity, law and punishment have been invaluable, checking, controlling, guiding the animal instincts which were, and still are to the end, the material of the moral life. Without these instincts life would never have persisted, so far as we can see,—would even now run the risk of allowing

Protecting
immaturity
of the race

itself to be snuffed out. Without the moral checks upon them life would have destroyed itself. At any rate there would not have been the order and restraint of morality, the security and permanence of social order, within which the higher spiritual virtues have had their chance of development.

And this period of tutelage of the race is a stage, and of the individual.
or a series of stages, through which each individual member of the race has to pass for himself. Each passes through these stages more or less rapidly, but while he is passing through them he has to be protected not only against dangers from outside but also against his own want of understanding and of self-control, even for the security of his own physical development and that of others. A wilful, undisciplined child may not only burn its own fingers or end its own life by persisting in playing with fire, but may burn down its home and do much injury to its neighbours too. And the moral dangers to self and to others that arise from lack of discipline are no less serious. In fact, not only has the community a *right* to protect itself and its work against the wayward impulses of the intellectually and morally immature among its members, as well as against outside aggression, but it has a *duty* so to do, not only for its own sake but also for the sake of the immature member himself. *He* has a right to the best training, especially the best moral training, the community can give him. For his entrance into the community, for the level of intellectual and moral equipment from which he begins his conscious life,

Discipline an obligation on community

others are more responsible than he. The supreme obligation of the community, be it family or state, to him, binding upon them from the very beginning, and eventually his supreme obligation to the community, binding upon him in proportion as he enters upon his heritage of the conscious moral life of the community, lies just in this mutual interaction of the moral will for good.

because life is
moral.

The final purpose of all things, at any rate the ultimate end of human action and effort, is the production of the good will, the only essentially and invariably good thing in the world without qualification. The end of all training and discipline is the development of the intelligent moral nature of man. Whatever else life may be, it is primarily and fundamentally a training ground, a school, in which no one can shirk or escape his share both of learning and of teaching without great peril both to himself and to others. All are learners all the time. Else, what is the use of experience? But each contributes also to the experience of others, consciously or unconsciously. And whatever capacity or relative advantage any and each one may have in the way of knowledge and experience, power or influence, he is in duty bound to use not only for the better ordering of his own life but also in the service of his neighbours. And of all services he can render to others none is greater than that of furnishing them with the best available guidance in the better ordering of their life and the best motives and inducements so in their turn to

All must
receive and
give moral
action.

serve their fellows. By the very nature of man and human society this is the highest duty of all.

Most obviously is this the duty of every parent, teacher, and ruler, as such. Their very *raison d'être* is so to check and discourage wrongdoing and the impulses to wrongdoing, so to promote and encourage welldoing and the impulses to welldoing, that those under their charge, especially the young and the intellectually and morally immature, may come to know the right and best line of conduct and be disposed to choose it and persevere in it in spite of all difficulty, all temptation, all natural drift there may be to the worse course.

And the world is so constituted and man is so placed in it that there are always difficulties and temptations enough, there is always drift enough along the line of least resistance, to call out all the intelligence, all the courage and self-control, all the good will that can be attained. There is work enough here for parent, teacher, and ruler to do in the fulfilling of this main function of moral training. And the duty falls to them not only as individuals in their individual and personal relationships in the home or the school or the state. It belongs to them also as delegates, representatives, of the larger community. The proper fulfilment of it is the highest interest and obligation of the community itself, for the sake of each individual member and for the sake of the collective whole. And as man extends his relationships, the avenues along which his thought and

Special
obligation on
parent, etc.

But obligation
is universal.

feeling and will push out and touch others, as the interdependence of the different individuals, groups, and societies becomes more realised and obvious, this duty and obligation which begins with the child in the family comes to be extended potentially and actually to the whole race, and includes the moral interaction not only of individuals but of the various groups and communities among themselves. It becomes universal. We are all members one of another.

Punishment
part of this
general moral
obligation.

It is as a special form of this general moral obligation, as one type of means toward this universal moral end, one method of moral action and reaction, one instrument of discipline and moral training, that punishment has to be judged.

While the obligation of moral relationship is universal, has no limits in extent and depth—the one absolute law is that a man shall do what is just and right to every other person with whom he comes into relationship, regardless of cost,—there are obviously limits, in the personal rights of others, as to the ways in which this obligation can properly be fulfilled. The whole body of Law, Civil, Criminal, and International, our systems of education, our missions and other religious activities, are attempts to work out the obligation along more or less well-defined lines. All life has its moral aspect. But clearly *punishment* is not a universal duty. And however beneficent may have been the use of pain in this way as an instrument of law and moral discipline there are limits,

as we have seen, to its effectiveness ; and even where it may be effective it will still have to justify itself as more effective than other means if other means present themselves.

The goodness and rightness of an act or a method of action is not something absolute, inherent in the act or method itself, considered independently of the persons concerned and the relations between them. The act or method of action falls to be judged mainly by two standards. The first, and the most important in the reciprocal personal judgment of the people concerned, is that of the aim, purpose, and spirit of the person acting, *i.e.* the motive. The second is the effectiveness of the act or method for the attainment of the end. This latter is perhaps more difficult to estimate than the motive. It is more complicated, involving insight into habits and dispositions of mind, into many circumstances past and present and expectations of the future, and the way in which all these things are likely to affect the mind, temper, and character of the persons concerned. But always the real end of all law, discipline, and punishment is personal, *i.e.* it aims at certain effects upon the minds and wills of men, the wrongdoer, the person wronged, and the rest of the community. It deals with things and the equal distribution of pleasure or of pain only as rough-and-ready means, commending themselves to the average intelligence, of producing such effects.

Yet obligation is relative.

Two Standards.

1. Motive.

2. Effectiveness.

End is spiritual

It tries to bring home to all minds the wrongfulness of wrongdoing and to induce a disposition

to hesitate before following the egoistic impulse, a disposition to distrust and avoid this impulse; and finally it tries to get the natural instincts and impulses governed by a standard of action which is both impersonal, *i.e.* independent of the natural impulse to avoid pain and seek pleasure for one-self, and universal, in the sense that the individual will seek for himself only such ends as all may rightly seek for themselves, even further, that the individual will seek for all others what he seeks for himself.

therefore
punishment
looks forward.

Punishment, therefore, which seems to have developed out of the mainly backward-looking instinctive tendency to retaliation, is with reflective self-conscious beings really bound up with the highest ideal men have formed for the future. And its ultimate justification has to be sought in its effectiveness for that ideal end. As suffering inflicted by man it should work towards the same ends that we saw suffering served in the world of nature, and in human life as lived in that world. It should be, as the doctor's work both in medicine and in surgery is, man's best contribution to his fellow in aid of nature.

Does it add
unnecessary
pain?

But there is suffering enough in the world. Why should man add to that by inflicting pain which need not be? Can't the end be gained in other ways? There is no doubt that much of the suffering inflicted by men on one another is inflicted thoughtlessly, ignorantly, some even maliciously and wickedly. Perhaps even much of the suffering

inflicted by way of punishment, with good motive, may through the faultiness of human judgment miss the mark and prove ineffective. Even the justest and most righteous penalty may through some misunderstanding or a fault of temper cause either despair or resentment and tend to drive the wrongdoer into more settled opposition to law and government.

In the main, however, the human conscious use of pain in punishment has been intended to save from greater pain, loss, and injury. And so it commonly works out. We saw that pain is nature's warning and corrective guide, indicating that certain things and actions are dangerous to life and well-being. But often when the pain is felt the damage is already done and may be past remedy. Experience teaches, but there is truth in the saying that he is most unfortunate or most foolish who has to learn by direct personal experience. The wilful child playing with fire may have to suffer before it will learn, but it would be cruelty inexcusable in a parent to leave the child to suffer the natural effect in full. The wise mother will illustrate the working of the natural law by a comparatively harmless example which will give experience enough for the enforcing of the lesson, or she may produce the same effect by some other infliction of pain, or by some exercise of authority which may seem arbitrary but is really kindly and effective. So in home and school the laws of nature, which are perhaps slow and ruthless in their operation, are forestalled, by a timely warning

It prevents
greater pain.

Prevent more
serious injury
in course of
nature.

pain if need be—a sort of homoeopathic remedy or prophylactic against the more serious physical loss and suffering that nature has attached to some human errors and wrongdoings. And not only the laws of nature. In the home and school the child learns also obedience to the moral laws embodied in the laws of the state, and by kindly personal discipline, and punishment if need be, is trained to habitual obedience to an impersonal and universal requirement, any breach of which in the less sheltered public life of the state would bring much more serious suffering, the effects of which might be irremediable.

Many, if not most, of the mild punishments of home and school are of this nature, and if they cause pain do so only to guard against greater pain and suffering elsewhere and in later days, and so they would justify themselves even in mere quantitative measurement of pain.

Main function
and
justification
moral.

But this is not the only motive that has made punishment so universal. If it were so it would be apt to lose its force in the case of moral faults that have no obvious and immediate painful consequences. That may often be actually the case. There are doubtless many elements that enter into the minds of parents, teachers, and others, when they use punishment as an instrument in the training of the young, as we saw there were various elements that led to punishment in the primitive human society. But the most persistent and potent element in the practice and theory of punish-

ment to-day is the conviction that the moral law outweighs in authority and importance any consideration of physical pleasure and pain, and that this moral law and moral training is, for the child at any rate in the formative years, the most important of all ends, the most imperative of all claims. The conviction may often be dim to consciousness and may be very illogically carried out in other relationships, but it persists even in otherwise debased characters. To encourage a child in admittedly evil courses, not to discourage it by whatever means are available, is a sign of moral deterioration which shocks the most hardened wrongdoer.

And this is but an instance, clearer than some others, to all minds that retain any natural affection and sense of justice, of that moral imperative, moral driving power, which is characteristic of man wherever he is found. Conscience may have become somewhat discredited in these latter days. Some think that because its growth can be traced, and because its content is so different if not contradictory in different individuals and societies, it has lost its authority. But there is still a categorical imperative which no criticism can dissolve, which drives men at all costs of pain and suffering to themselves and to others to insist on what they feel to be right and just as being the only sure foundation and bond of every society. With children and adults, individuals and societies, it may not be possible to *compel* them to right conduct, still less to right

The moral imperative beyond all other.

feeling and good will, but at any rate they shall be taught and expected to do what is commonly admitted to be right, and the way of transgressors shall be made hard. By whatever means are available, aggressive overweening egoism shall be discouraged, nipped in the bud if possible ; failing that, it shall be resisted or punished.

Morality the
basis of
society.

This duty, we have already said, is owed not only to the person wronged but to the wrongdoer, to the community of which he is a member, and to whatever moral authority may be conceived of as presiding over the world. The means and method used may be varied according to the intelligence, the power, and the other conditions of the relationship between the parties concerned. But whatever the means available, they must be used, or the right is not done, and the individual life of the wrongdoer and perhaps of others is felt to be heading for certain disaster and the life of the community to be doomed to dissolution, disruption and decay, its one bond of mutual respect and confidence, and therefore of unity and strength, gone. The one thing no moral being can do is to tolerate, sit down with, leave alone, ignore and be indifferent to, known wrongdoing unashamed and unrepented of, and yet look God and man in the face. If he leave it alone out of fear or favour, he writes himself down a coward or time-server, contemptible to himself and to others ; if through moral indifference, he is perhaps still more dangerous. The individual may delegate his power

Neutrality in
morals is
disloyalty.

and duty of active discipline to others. In a family or school the actual exercise of discipline may well be left in the hands of the most experienced members ; in a town or state the ordinary enforcement of the law is commonly left to the constituted authority. But the individual cannot divest himself of his responsibility, and if for any reason the law and the properly constituted authorities should prove defective and lag behind the common sense of justice, or if an unforeseen combination of disorderly elements should threaten to overpower the forces of law and order, the individual citizens will have to combine in active support of justice to check the disorder, bring the offenders to judgment, and, if it is felt necessary, to punishment, and take such steps as are calculated to make further trouble of the kind unlikely in the future. If they do not they will not only lose their peace and freedom, but they will probably feel themselves, and be felt by others, to deserve to lose them.

CHAPTER III

The three
essential
elements of
moral society.

HERE we reach the bed-rock on which the morally healthy human life and society are founded. We saw it imperfectly foreshadowed, through the earliest stages of human society, in the working of the primitive instinct of retaliation under the modifying influences of natural affection and the sense of justice as equivalence. Substantially the same elements stand out in the best individual life and the best of our modern states, and even in the perfect life of the ideal commonwealth of our dreams ; but, where the long ages of moral experience and education have had their due effect, the instinct has been moralised, *i.e.* brought more completely under the control of the ideal of right and justice, this ideal itself has been more perfected and humanised, and the natural affection broadened and ripened, strengthened and purified, by the ideal.

All are
essential.

But if these three elements are together sufficient foundation, each is essential. Right ideals are not only guiding and inspiring, they are the great unifying and organising forces in the individual and common life. But they may seem in themselves impersonal and cold. The sense of solida-

city, beginning in natural affection and expanding into good will on the part of each member of the society towards his fellows, enriches and tests the ideals, and adds the warmth of flesh and blood, so to speak, to their motive power. It also provides an atmosphere of understanding, forbearance, and confidence, in which the moral interaction is better adjusted, made more effective, with the least hindrance from unnecessary friction. But the widest sense of solidarity, the purest and most enlightened affection, will be no better than useless sentiment, the most complete ideal will be impotent, without adequate response of the will in action; unless, that is, there is such loyalty to the common ideal that the individual member will not only himself keep the law of the ideal, so far as he understands it, but will act with energy and courage and good will, even at cost to himself, and perhaps to others, to maintain that law in the society.

This is the very life and health of all societies, small or great. And what is true of societies formed of individuals is true also, *mutatis mutandis*, of the world-society of nations for which men hope. As the common ideal of justice and the exercise of intelligence, energy, and courage in maintaining it have given us what reign of law we enjoy within each nation, and have created the necessary apparatus of laws and law courts, and are there to maintain, *re-create* and amend these as intelligence and good will suggest, so will it

Also essential
in international
society.

Three
essential
elements of
society.

have to be with the reign of law as between the nations.

Source of
international
law and
institutions.

If the nations of the world are ever to be content to entrust their interests and their desires and claims for justice to the judgment of an international court, and if international war and the fear of it are to disappear, as private war and the fear of it have disappeared in well-governed communities, then these same elements must be present in the nations as such. That is, the nations as such must have a common ideal of right and justice, a sense of solidarity and mutual obligation amongst themselves, and such active loyalty to one another and the law of the ideal that they will be prepared at all cost to maintain it with energy and courage and whatever of intelligence and good will they may have.

Active loyal
will and
machinery.

With these elements present, the requisite machinery of international courts, etc., will easily be created, maintained, and if necessary amended and re-created. But without these elements no law and no machinery however perfect could long maintain itself. Peace and mutual confidence require something more even than identity of will and organisation of force. Given the possibility of a complete international law and court equipped with adequate force to enforce its decisions, if there is not sufficient reasonable confidence in the rightness of the law, in the intellectual ability and the impartial good will of the court, and in the loyalty of the other members of the group, the separate nations will not be prepared—indeed,

as trustees for the time being of national interests, *ought* not—to entrust their vital interests to the safe keeping of such a court. And, whether with or without international court, conflict will always be likely to arise, indeed *ought* to arise, whatever may be the weapons of the conflict, when contradictory ideals of right and justice are held, or, what is practically the same thing, when with nominal assent to a common ideal, there is active and deliberate refusal to be bound by the recognised law of the ideal. Doubtless this moral reaction in conflict will be rarer and should be more effectual when common action is taken with due deliberation, with all the advantages of judicial methods, as a check upon passion or panic. But in matters of serious moral importance where the issue is clear, there can be no neutrality to the instructed national conscience any more than to the instructed individual conscience. That would be disloyalty to the first and most imperative claim on the moral will. The moral will *must* react on wrong, whatever the method or means it may choose of expressing itself.

Neutrality in moral issues is impossible.

At present the nations are, without international organisation, neighbours to one another much as settlers would be in a new country which has not yet been taken over by any established government. If any one or any combination of them offends against the sense of justice of the rest by action or threat of action against some other one or other combination, then the rest

Present international situation individualistic.

have to consider, each for himself or jointly, whether the aggressor is to be allowed to carry out his aggression. Doubtless the one whose interest is injured or threatened will take some action for self defence. That may be sufficient. But the strength may be with the aggressor. Then the neighbours cannot avoid action. Their method of action and the means they use will depend on their experience and the practice of their time; also upon their estimate of the character and aim, the resolution and resources, of the aggressor. If he is amenable to reason they will naturally use persuasion. If that fails, if he is incapable of understanding or refuses to see the wrongness of his action and persists in it, they must use in order to restrain him whatever means they have, or their incipient society goes to pieces. If they cannot restrain him they must at any rate protest and in some way or other excommunicate him, or again their society goes to pieces, their self-respect is weakened and their bond of union loosened.

Analogy of
international
society.

But, it may be urged, this is not punishment. There is no sovereign power charged with the duty of enforcing law, with sanctions, upon the nations as a magistrate is within a nation or as a parent or teacher is charged with the maintenance of the law of the home or school.

The obligation
is there
irrespective
of machinery

Perhaps this is true. But this is one case of the general obligation to fulfil the moral law oneself and to take one's share of responsibility for its maintenance in the world. We call the assertion

of the law, to which all are bound according to their capacity, by the name of punishment when there is a naturally or legally established authority to exercise it. But the obligation is there before the machinery and organisation which the obligation and man's response to it creates. The absence of organisation and machinery only makes the obligation more obviously direct and its exercise more difficult, more liable to abuse and ineffectiveness. With or without organisation the moral law calls for vindication somehow between nations as between individuals.

The real difficulty at present is not so much the absence of international law with a court and force at its disposal. It is not even the general absence of good will. It is the absence of mutual confidence between the nations. Either they feel themselves as nations to be following different ideals, or they have no confidence in one another's loyalty to the ideals they are supposed to hold in common. So the international law they have is in some respects inoperative, and they dare not set up a court and trust its decisions in matters of serious importance, still less would they entrust it with force to use.

And there is a reason for this which is not always sufficiently recognised. The mind, conscience, and will of a body of people, of a nation, is a composite mind, conscience, and will, made up of the minds, consciences, and wills of the individuals who constitute the nation. And this

its limits—
what is
lacking.

Composite
mind of nation

composite mind, conscience, and will it is difficult to shape and express and difficult to recognise. As each individual mind acts more or less intelligently and freely, can be persuaded, not compelled, so is it with the composite mind. Individually and collectively men are capable of being moved in quite incalculable ways by the suggestion of ideas. Even a small section of a nation, if it has clear ideas of what is desirable and some insistence and incisiveness in the expression of its ideas, may carry the whole nation with it by sheer force of will or enthusiasm, for better or for worse. But, also for better or for worse, there are severe limits to the extent to which a section can carry the whole body with it in continuous action. Ultimately the mind and will of a nation can only be moralised as are those of an individual, *i.e.* as they come to make decisions and act with understanding and deliberate choice according to a standard and ideal of action. And this does not generally come easily or quickly to either individual or nation.

often lower
than
individual
mind.

In the meanwhile it is a matter of common observation that the moral level on which the whole body thinks, decides, and acts, may be very different from that on which any one individual or section of the whole would think, decide, and act. It may be higher; it is apt to be much lower than the level of the best instructed conscience. There are considerable elements in most of the nations of people who, though they recognise

the usefulness of law and order within the state, do not really care for high moral principle, and are disposed in international affairs to welcome a relief from the restraint of law and give the rein to their predatory instincts. These and all the other different elements in a nation, thinking and willing at very different moral and intellectual levels, go to make up the composite mind, conscience, and will. And so much are we members one of another that, while each one is in proportion to his intelligence and capacity responsible for his own action, yet the mind and will of the collective whole does influence not a little the individual mind and will, and is responsible to no small degree for the intellectual and moral standard adopted, especially in the early stages of the individual life ; and, what is more to the point here, no individual or section of the whole can escape responsibility for a low intellectual and moral level of the collective mind and will. No section can force its mind, conscience, and will upon the whole. By the very nature of spirit this is impossible. But every one is under obligation—and, as we saw before, it is part of his supreme moral obligation to his fellows—to use whatever means he has available to persuade and otherwise induce his own and the coming generations to adopt and act upon the best principles he knows.

Perhaps it is these two difficulties, the fact that a nation's mind cannot easily be ascertained or ^{Has a nation a conscience ?}

expressed, and the fact that the nation's mind and conscience may be working at a very different level from those of the individual citizen, that have led many to think, more or less confusedly, that the rules of morality commonly acknowledged among individuals are not applicable to societies and states. The witty ambassador's description of the diplomatist as "an honest man sent abroad to lie for his country" is suggestive of the gulf that there is in many minds between the standards of private and international morals. Some go further and deny that a body of individuals, a nation, can have a mind, a conscience, and a will. They say that these belong only to individuals. The state is an abstraction. There is no such thing as a composite mind, conscience, and will. "You cannot indict a nation." Individual men are the only reality with whom you can deal.

The
individualistic
position.

Now it is true that individual men are real, are ultimately the real moral units, without which no social unit with composite mind, conscience, and will can exist. And the reality of the individual responsibility for his own acts is not lessened by his being a member of a society, possibly of many societies, including the state, where he shares with others in action and in responsibility for the joint action. Perhaps there is more reality in the individual man as a moral being than in a society or state. He is in mind, conscience, and will more organised, concentrated, unified under a stable control. At any rate, in so far as he is more organised and unified, there is more moral

responsibility for his acts than there is in the less intelligent and less organised and unified mind of an inexperienced person. And the state may perhaps be less organised and unified, and therefore not so morally responsible. And if it is so the individual members who have clear minds and consciences have to bear considerable responsibility for the lower level of their fellows and of the collective whole.

Yet, whatever the moral level of the state as such, and wherever the responsibility for that lies, nations as such do act, and their acts have a certain quality as right or wrong or as a mixture of both. And, as having such quality, the acts and everyone responsible for them will be in their degree praiseworthy or blameworthy. And if rewards and punishments are ever deserved and fulfil a useful function within a society, nations also would seem to deserve rewards and punishments of some kind or other. They must and do bear the consequences of their acts, and the apportioning of these will presumably fulfil a useful function in the development of international morality. The more we are convinced that the ideal of society demands that what is right as between individuals within a state should be considered right as between individuals of different states, and also (*mutatis mutandis*) between states themselves, that is, the more we hold right and justice in essence to be universal, the more we must carry it into international as well as personal

Yet a state is
a moral being

under same
moral law as
individual

relationships so far as they admit. The relationships are different, but, so far as they are parallel, the same moral standard and ideal hold for both.

therefore must
act as moral
being.

There is therefore a moral obligation upon all, individuals and nations alike, not only to do the right but to fulfil the due share of responsibility for others knowing and doing the right. Every person and every community must meet this obligation with whatever of guidance they can get from experience and intuition, from theory and sympathy. It will tax to the utmost all their spiritual resources of wisdom, energy, and courage. It is in its two aspects the supreme business of life.

Means and
method of
action vary.

But while the universal obligation is to seek the moral end, which is a spiritual end, there is no authority set to define the means or the method of this moral activity. Spirit has to express itself and work its ends in and through material media as best it can. The only law of the means is that they be the best available for the end, the most effective, as has already been said. The experience of the past may suggest means—and it should not be lightly put aside—but it cannot determine the action of to-day. How much of stimulus or repression, how much positive encouragement of good, how much discouragement of wrong, what kind of rewards, what methods and degrees of punishment, how far freedom should go and where and how to intervene,—all these and similar questions can be answered only by the ripe judg-

ment of an experienced mind, and the wiser the mind the less dogmatic will be the judgment. Even granting that the Christian law of love must be the ultimate standard and test, and so ruling out of discipline and punishment every unworthy motive or passion, vindictiveness, cruelty, mere wayward impulse, lack of sympathy, etc., there are infinitely varied ways in which love expresses itself in the interaction of different characters in different circumstances.

Happily, in the matter of discipline and punishment, where the moral action has to take that form, the most formative part of discipline comes in the early years, when the child is most sheltered from external dangers and surrounded normally by an atmosphere of good will and natural affection, which helps to make good the deficiencies of instinct, experience, and theory. The child's character is most plastic just when its weakness and dependence make the greatest claims upon the love of parents and friends. Here at least it calls, not in vain, for patience and discriminating, watchful control. And the same sort of care, if more impersonal and impartial, is about the child in the somewhat wider society of school. In the discipline of school and home, through the critical times of physical and mental immaturity, before habits have hardened and while physical restraint is still easy and natural, affection and inspiration, inducement and guidance, play a large part in the process which the child passes through as he learns to fit himself and his desires into the needs of the

Discipline in
home and
school.

greater society, and to understand and yield obedience to the impersonal law of the ideal.

Discipline
in State.

So he becomes more fit, in body, mind, and character, to take his share in the work and the government of the outside world, the less homogeneous, less sheltered societies in which he has henceforward to play his part. The law of the state has to be universal and rigorously enforced. Allowance for individual peculiarities cannot so easily be made here as in the family. A man has to take full responsibility for his own action and his share in the responsibility for the action of others.

Life in world
requires it.

And this is a serious business for which he cannot be too well equipped, physically, intellectually, morally. He cannot afford to dispense with any efficient aid to self-mastery and control. The community has to provide against possible enmity without and criminality within. And all human life is lived face to face with a nature that is kind enough when understood, but is not merciful to ignorance or wilful folly. With all the beauties and the simple joys of nature and its full provision for the mind and body of man, with all the organisation and good will of society, life is full of hard facts, shows many mal-adjustments and failures. Even the Christian religion, with its gospel of forgiveness, free grace, and love, with its hope for the weakest and the most degraded, and with its victory over sin and death, offers here short shrift for the impenitently slack and self-satisfied, little encouragement for the stiff-necked who

Christianity
requires it.

resent restraint, and small promise for those who cannot endure hardness and persevere to the end. If the New Testament conception of pain and punishment is different from the Old, it is not from contempt of law or making light of judgment or disbelief in discipline. Rather are these things made more inward, more searching, though at the same time they are better understood and more welcome.

The question, therefore, is not whether in our various relationships there shall be law and obligation, discipline and sanctions. Law and obligation are there for us in the ideal and in the relationships. Sanctions are there already in the natural order of things. What has to be decided in every case is what discipline and what sanctions available to man are the most suitable under the circumstances, most effective of the spiritual end in view.

CHAPTER IV

Moral value
of retaliatory
action.

HERE, before leaving the subject of human punishment, I return for a moment to the elements of punishment from which we started. The primitive instinct of retaliation had even in the earliest stages of human life its moral value as well as supplying the driving force and the raw material, so to speak, of social justice. It needed to be moralised and reinforced by ever better ideals of justice and by affection. But the sense of satisfaction that the human mind has always found and still finds in what was called the law of equivalence is significant. The satisfaction is not confined to the injured. It is felt also by the wrongdoer and by the community. The equivalent may be difficult to assess, and the rough-and-ready assessment of it that is practically possible may only be a very rough approximation to the precisely just. Indeed, equivalence of actual suffering cannot be really effected. The effects of an act or of a loss upon different minds are apt to be entirely different, and obviously some injuries and losses can never be made good. Yet there is a real and solid satisfaction to all concerned

when the attempt is honestly made without any taint of personal vindictiveness and ill will.

The moral value of the attempt is very great. Its power for reconciliation. Quite commonly it does away with the feeling of resentment on the part of the injured, and on the other side it tends to restore the proper self-respect of the wrongdoer, and so it makes reconciliation easier. When the doer of an injury has acknowledged the wrong and made practical reparation by an equivalent payment, so far as that is possible and so far as the common conscience requires, the moral obligation is so far met, the moral law is vindicated. The chief bar to mutual good will is removed, and the more the good will is evidenced the more complete the reconciliation, the atonement. It may show itself in each trying to outdo the other in generous forbearance, the wrongdoer anxious to make reparation more than law requires, if only to prove the genuineness of his repentance, the injured refusing anything in the way of reparation beyond what his needs require.

But if the injured, or the community which Danger of easy forgiveness. should act for him, simply forgo the retaliation, be it in the shape of resistance or defence or punishment or requirement of compensation, out of indifference or laziness or cowardice or from some other unworthy motive, the result is not so likely to be reconciliation as contempt, contempt for the law and for all concerned. There is no little moral peril, to the person wronged and to the wrongdoer and to all observers, in easy

indifference to wrong done and in an easy forgiveness and wiping off of debts and trespasses whose significance and wrongfulness have not been in some degree realised. There may be other methods of winning the aggressive egoist from his egoism without this retaliation in any shape, but the moral value in the principle of equivalent penalty can only be set aside safely when the alternative action or reaction is more valuable morally, more effective of the desired spiritual end. And such effective alternative has not been easily found, nor when found has it been found to be easy. It is indeed the supreme work of God.

But as this more positive side of the working of the moral forces in the spiritual world is to be dealt with in the next part of this essay, on Atonement, it remains here only to draw what conclusions we can from our discussion of punishment as a special application of suffering, and see whether any light is thrown by it on the questions as to whether God punishes and whether man should.

Punishment
and forgiveness
alike moral
means for
spiritual end.

It has become increasingly clear that the ultimate end and justification of punishment or of the forgoing of punishment, as of all law and government, all discipline and vindication of law, whatever form it may take, is no abstract impersonal thing, not law itself nor even justice, considered as a matter of external social order and regularity. Law fulfils its ultimate purpose, and the end of justice is fully realised, only as they produce not only well-ordered lives but a society of human

spirits that love justice and righteousness. Punishment and the forgoing of punishment are alike means to the same end, that men may know the right from the wrong, may know the wrongfulness of wrong, and may freely and enthusiastically cleave to the right and maintain it against wrong. The means may not always be effectual. Man is free and may ignore, neglect, or reject, the best gifts of man and of God. The best motivated punishment may, we know too well, so far as our experience goes, be misunderstood or for some other reason fail in its purpose: so may the best motivated and most costly forgiveness and the most complete remission of punishment. But the end is always present to the moral mind for the testing of the means. A forgiveness or a remission of punishment that had no moral effect on the forgiven and sprang out of no purpose of good towards him would be as immoral as a punishment that was purely vindictive, that neither sprang from nor issued in righteousness.

If God punishes we are sure it is in love to the sinner as well as to the others concerned, for *his* good as well as the others', for He is love. And when He forgives, His forgiveness does not arise from mere easy good nature, or even from pity only for the painful consequences, for His love is holy. To treat sin lightly and to forgive as if sin didn't matter, is not the way of holy love, and would tend rather to tighten sin's hold on men than to redeem them from its power. God's forgiveness (if we may speak of it as we see it in

God's love and
forgiveness holy

and therefore
effectual.

those who are most conscious of having experienced it), when we see it to be effectual, is effectual just because His love is holy. That is, we feel that He realises the sinfulness of sin as none other can, and suffers more from it than the sinner himself—realises and suffers as only holy love can. So is His forgiveness free from the peril I have tried to express. It does not make light of sin. Rather does it tend to make the sinner see the sin in its wrongfulness as God sees it, so making it hateful and hated, not only because of its consequences but in itself, as doing despite and causing suffering to holy love. So does holy love, whether punishing or forgoing punishment, in its holy forgivingness, in its readiness to suffer and to bless, tend to deal effectively with sin as a state and quality of the will by obliterating it, changing the evil will to good will, even to the rudiments of a like holy love.

Such forgiveness worth *any* suffering.

This process once effected, or well begun, the worst of all the consequences and the worst punishment of sin, *i.e.* the entail of sin itself, the natural law of sin and death, is done away. Then the pain and suffering of the natural or legal painful consequences are a matter of comparative indifference, borne, if nature and the constitution of things so ordain, with patience and even with joy. *Any* painful consequences that have brought the wrongdoer to his senses, made him realise the wrongness of his doings, and brought him face to face with a holy love that scorches and condemns, makes him suffer as never before, and

yet seeks him, suffers with him, forgives him, redeems and sanctifies him, such are all worth while.

But now, if this is in any degree a true account of effectual forgiveness, as it may be seen in the purest human love in contact with sin, the love of a godly mother for an erring child, of a father for the prodigal son, as it is writ large for all the world to see in God's love in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, such forgiveness is not merely or mainly, if it is at all, a forgoing of punishment or remission of penalty in the shape of the natural or the ordained painful consequences of sin. Punishment has often been the apparently effectual if not indispensable precursor of forgiveness. Forgiveness is essentially a dealing with sin to eradicate it, destroy its root in the will, rather than with the pain and suffering which in the good order of things, whether by God's ordinance in nature or by man's in human societies, are attached to sin. If it deals with these at all it does so secondarily and as it were incidentally. Indeed, so far as our experience in this life goes, the painful consequences of sin both to the sinner and to others, the physical deterioration and social loss, are often left to run their course though the forgiveness be complete and in its essential moral meaning and redemptive operation effectual.

So it would seem that we have come round by a different path to the same point that we reached in discussing the functions of pain and suffering as such. These are quite commonly, though by

Forgiveness
not letting off
punishment.

Same
conclusion,
Comparative
indifference
of suffering.

no means always, the result of human wrongdoing, but they are not even then in themselves to be considered as punishment of wrongdoing. Rather are they a useful, and on the whole a beneficent, though painful and sometimes even terrible, element in the constitution of things, whose main end is the perfection of man's life, physical, spiritual and moral. Wisely met and well used, they work together for good, man's highest good, tending to the maintenance, the enrichment, and the perpetuation of all that is best and most valuable in human life. Suffering is always painful, but, in view of the moral and spiritual gain, those who have had wide and deep experience of both have found it in the long run, if not a matter of comparative indifference, at any rate well worth while.

CHAPTER V

AND now, last, has our discussion thrown light on the two questions with which we began? Does God punish? Is man right in punishing?

Does God punish?—Yes, but not as man does.

We can here, within the limits of the argument of this essay, only speak of the action of God as it comes within the range of our common experience, that is, in the natural order of things which is independent of man and his conscious will, in those Natural Laws which man does not make or will but discovers and then more or less accepts and uses. This action we call God's action and these Laws we call God's laws because we cannot conceive of them as the expression of no mind or of any other mind. We don't know all these laws and their limits, nor do we know all the forces and powers, physical and spiritual, that work within these limits. The miracle of yesterday may be the common experience of to-morrow. But all science, all sanity, and in a sense all morality, depend on their impartial uniformity and reliability. All our feeling of security, for things of the body and of the spirit, rests on our faith

Does God
punish?

Natural laws =
God's laws.

Not fully
known by us

but fixed

as conditions
of our life.

They make
for good.

God's
punishment
is by natural
law

that there is nothing arbitrary about these laws, about the mind and will that they partially express. They are the given conditions of our life, the material in which we work, the framework, the setting, the scene, within which we play our part. We have a conviction, without which life would be hardly bearable, that ultimately and in the long run they make for righteousness, and that the morally good life tends to health and happiness and the morally bad life leads to pain and suffering, in the individual and in the society. But we have to recognise frankly it is often so only in the long run. The connexion is not uniformly or immediately obvious. Hence much of man's trouble and perplexity. What we are concerned to notice here is God's action or reaction upon man's wrongdoing, as seen in the natural order of things, as compared with man's action in punishment.

God's dealing with man's wrongdoing in the natural order of things, so far as our experience goes, is after the fashion of His other activities in nature, where the sequence of cause and effect is regular and unbroken, inevitable and absolutely precise in proportion. No human act but has its due effect, whether in the physical or the spiritual realm. All may be love, but all's law. No ignorance, no good or evil intention, can break the sequence. "The mills of God grind slowly but they grind exceeding small." Sinner and saint alike can count upon them for good, saint and sinner alike have to reckon with them. The

only way to prevent an effect is to stop the operation of the cause.

In this way, apart altogether from considerations of life after this life, and apart from sanctions that transcend our common experience, God does deal with man's wrongdoing. It ever brings with it consequences, by His wise arrangement. And often we call this punishment. It is all a part of the natural law of wrongdoing, which is familiar to all observant and instructed minds. Wrongdoing tends ever by force of suggestion and habit to produce more wrongdoing. And man's wrongdoing brings on himself and often also upon others, sooner or later, pain and suffering. And this not arbitrarily or by chance but, according to the nature of the act, as natural and inevitable consequence. It is not that God intervenes in a natural order, as man does, to expedite the moral ends of justice by punishment. God's action in punishment *is* the natural order, the inevitable consequences, the essential constitution of things. And it is a good order. The law of cause and effect is, the Christian can but believe, fixed and absolutely just. Through the law man has learned whatever he knows of moral order, within it he has attained whatever he has attained of virtue and moral freedom. Through it and within it God also acts freely, though never arbitrarily or lawlessly, for His eternal purposes of love.

In this sense then God may be said to punish wrongdoing in the natural order of things. Or if

we prefer to put it differently, God has so arranged things that man in wrongdoing brings inevitable consequences, often called punishment, on himself.

But natural law may be slow.

Men must be prompt to forestall it.

But in punishment God's ways are not as man's ways. In God's reaction upon sin there is, as we have noticed, all the inevitable certainty and precision of a Law of Nature. There is often also its slowness and consequent obscurity to human short-sightedness. It *may* grind slowly, though it grinds surely and exceeding small. Man, we have seen, by instinct defends himself against aggression and retaliates, promptly. Under the influence of reason and of natural affection he moralises his retaliation into warning, discipline, and, if need be, punishment. But the action to be effectual must be direct and unmistakable in its application; the wrongdoer and all concerned must, if possible, know the reason and see the justice of it. The better the man the nearer will his purpose approximate to the will and purpose of God, that of holy love. And the purpose must also largely determine the means and method he will use. This surely will mean to the Christian at any rate that the end he seeks and the means employed will come to be decided by the standard of his conception of God formed from the words and deeds of Jesus Christ and what he knows of God's action on man in Jesus Christ. But sometimes, when he has means at hand for the effecting of the worthy purpose, he dares not wait for the mills of God, just because they do grind so slowly

and so exceeding small. He feels he must act, must intervene in the natural order, supplement it by the use of his own intelligence and good will, not necessarily out of impatience or distrust of the good will of God and the effectiveness of His action, certainly not to thwart the will and act of God, but to coöperate with that will, to further the carrying out of the good purpose that is ever behind the action of God in the natural order. Just as in other fields of action, *e.g.* as physician or surgeon, builder of ships or houses, he uses his knowledge of natural law to save and to enrich life, coöperating with some natural forces, in the teeth of others, not surely against the will of God which keeps both sets of forces in operation, so does he use his moral understanding to escape and to save others from the law of sin and death, to maintain the right and to train his children in right ways, and any others who will listen to him, with whatever means he finds available. Among these means are the use of pain and suffering in various forms of discipline and punishment. And there is nothing in the natural order of things, in the action of God on human wrongdoing, so far as we can see it, to rule out this use of pain and suffering as such. The only absolute obligation is that he himself obey the best law he sees, and do what in him lies to help others to see and obey it also. For this he must use the best means at his disposal. But act in some way he must or he will suffer in himself, and be in some measure responsible for others suffering, the inevitable ruin

Men must
intervene
to expedite
the purpose
of the law.

Analogy of
doctor aiding
nature

therefore he
may punish
if no better
method
available.

Supreme
obligation to
maintain right.

which persistence in the wrong course threatens. There is necessity for the exercise of all care and due regard for the personal rights of others, the freedom and moral development of other personalities. This is a very large, far-reaching, and important consideration and proviso, into the discussion of which, and all the questions of casuistry which arise out of it and in connexion with it, we cannot here enter and have no need to enter. The only thing we wish to insist on here, gathering up the gist of this part of the essay, in a sentence, is that in moral issues there is no room for neutrality ; the supreme obligation on man is that with whatever of wisdom he may call to his aid, he must do what in him lies to maintain the right and react against wrongdoing, using, of whatever means are at his disposal, those which seem most appropriate and most effectual. It is not only justifiable, it is imperative. His very knowledge of the right and the wrong constitutes an obligation. His duty of love to God and to his neighbour call for his best endeavour. When all is done that love can do, and only then, can God and man be content to leave the slow mills of the natural order to their grim work.

Only wise love
knows how.

How and when shall man intervene effectually ? Only the wise good man can say. And this will be the severest task and test of whatever wisdom and virtue, love, courage, and insight, he may have acquired. This is, again, the supreme work of God. For God too does not, cannot, leave His mills to their work till He too has done all that

holy love can do for the effecting of its purposes. Nay, they prove in the end to be a part of the operation of that love as it reacts on wrong. It is all part of the price love pays for the worth and grandeur of its essential nature, for the working out of its purpose. It is ever love that pays. But to love it is all worth while. It remains now to see how love sets to work, pays the price, and triumphs, how atonement and redemption comes about, with God and man.

III. ATONEMENT

CHAPTER I

Apology.

THIS last subject I enter upon with great diffidence, as must any one who knows anything at all of the variety and the vast amount of thought that has been given to it ; also with reverence and godly fear, for the fact of the Atonement in and by Jesus Christ is the most indisputable, most fundamental, and most precious element in my experience, my thought, and my hope. I venture to send out the result of my reflection only because, as it has come to me and worked in my own mind, it has given something of order and organisation of thought which has helped me, and though it may not commend itself to all, either because of defect in the thought or because of defect in the expression of it, a man is under some obligation to offer to his brethren any good he thinks he has received, leaving it to others to assess and accept or reject according to their estimate. Only so can common advance be made in thought and understanding.

Limited
purpose.

I only propose to touch on Atonement so far as it is affected by the empirical consideration of suffering and its application in punishment. It

is with no intention of controversy that I set out. I want only to see what common human experience of suffering and punishment has to suggest for the understanding of Atonement. If the suggestions run counter to some of the many theories that have been advanced, or if they lend support to some rather than to others, that is perhaps natural and inevitable, but it is incidental, not of purpose. I wish not to be negative and destructive, but positive and constructive, if only by the contribution of a single brick, as it were, or some material for the making of a brick, to help towards the edifice of thought in which we of this generation have to live and work.

Non-
controversial

I want to discuss shortly (1) what atonement means (Ch. I.), (2) the need out of which it arises (Chs. I.-IV.), (3) how in our actual experience it seems to be effected (Chs. V., VI.), and (4) what part suffering and punishment play in it (Chs. VII.-XII.).

Divisions of
subject.

(1) What is atonement ?

(1) *Nature of
Atonement.*

The word is a good English word carrying no little of its meaning on its face. So also is its near equivalent from a Latin origin, reconciliation. But we are not here concerned with words, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, or English. A word is only a more or less imperfect symbol for the idea it is used to express or suggest. The greater the idea, the thing, and the richer its history, the less adequately is any word likely to cover and to express it.

No matter of
philology or
etymology

nor of history.

Nor are we concerned here with the history of the idea or ideas symbolised by the words. This history is intensely interesting and illuminating. Not only do individual minds differ greatly in their thought about such great concrete conceptions as atonement, salvation, God, sin, etc., but each age is likely to have some dominant elements, legal, philosophical, moral, and religious, which colour its thought. The lines along which thought moves in one age are often quite different from those followed in another. Each age must re-think for itself the things and ideas by which it lives. So must each man.

Definition
or
description
of process.

So neither etymology nor the history of thought can settle this question for us. Quite broadly what we mean by atonement to-day is the reconciliation of God and man, the bringing of God and man into the relationship proper to them, *i.e.* the relationship of uninterrupted mutual love, of constant interaction of the Father's grace on the one hand with the son's loyalty on the other, and, where this has been interrupted, the removal of the alienation and of everything that has prevented the free intercourse of grace and loyalty proper to the relationship. This is atonement in ideal and complete achievement. But the name is given also rightly to an act which makes possible and begins or tends to effect such reconciliation, even though the full realisation of the possibilities inherent in it be a matter of infinite time and growth. An act of will on the one side may be of such a quality as to draw in response an act of

Narrower
meaning of
Atonement as
an act.

will on the other such that a relationship is thereby established pregnant with infinite possibilities of enrichment and growth. Something of this kind is generally understood to be the essence of the Christian doctrine of Atonement. The Atonement often means to us an act on the part of Christ which leads to the reconciliation of God and man, to the removal of every barrier between the two, which shall, by the moral transformation of man, issue ultimately in complete union of love, unity of spirit in the quality of the activities proper to the spirit.

This a usual theological sense.

The essence of atonement therefore is the removal of barriers, the doing away with distance or alienation, between spiritual beings, the dissolution of whatever hinders the free flow from one to the other of whatever spiritual good the one has which the other can receive.

Summing up of description.

We use the term generally only of the relationship between God and man, and that is what we are concerned with here. But the principle holds good of all our human relationships also where the actual state or quality of the relationship is not what at its best or ideally it should and might be. Every relationship between spiritual beings has its ideal and the law of the ideal. Whether the relationship be that of parent and child, husband and wife, teacher and taught, friend and friend, neighbour and neighbour, or of man and man as such, there is an ideal which gives the law of the relationship—and that ideal and law is to the Christian at any rate one of love—and, where

Special case of general truth.

this ideal of relationship has not been reached, or where, once to some extent reached, it has not been maintained and the law of the relationship has been broken, there is need of something of reconciliation, of the removal of distance and of barriers, that the intercourse of love and loyalty proper to the relationship may be attained or restored.

(2) *Need for Atonement.*

(2) If then atonement is a removal of barriers between spiritual beings for the free interflow, the giving and receiving, of spiritual good which is possible only when love is uninterrupted; if especially it is the removal of any barrier that prevents the free interaction of God's grace in its riches and man's reception and exercise of the same in grateful loyalty, what is the need for atonement? what constitutes the barrier and causes the alienation?

Moral difference or distance

Alienation is more than difference. 'Distance' in this connection is not spacial but moral. The difference between God and man that requires reconciliation is not one of quantity, reckoned either in space or in time, but of quality. It is not in His eternity, nor in His power, nor even in His knowledge. It is in His holiness. It does not arise necessarily from man's finite nature as such or from his bodily constitution and limitations. To the Christian believer in the Incarnation the human body has been proved capable of being an instrument and medium of expression of a spirit whose union with the Father knew no breach or interruption. The difference is not

not mere finitude

constituted by inevitable human ignorance and natural human weakness as such. These things are irrelevant, as irrelevant to this relationship of love, with its interchange of grace and loyalty between God and man, as is the infant weakness and ignorance to the mother's love. Every man falls short in many ways of the complete human ideal, perhaps even of the ideal of what was once possible for him individually. But this is not necessarily a barrier to love. Much of his deficiency, even if not due simply to his human finitude, is due largely to others who failed to guide him aright when he most needed guidance. These deficiencies may be all-important in considering his usefulness and efficiency in the world's work, and in considering the pleasure and profit, intellectual or artistic, that others may draw from his society, and yet may call for no blame or reproach, only for teaching, with patience and forbearance. All have such deficiencies in greater or less degree. They are a part of the common human lot. They constitute a special claim on love and the finest energies and activities of the more favoured, more instructed, better equipped spirit. If there be one child in a family more defective, physically or mentally, than the others, there is but the more lavish expenditure of love, patience, and ingenuity, to make good the deficiency if possible.

not mere
deficiency for
which he is
not responsible.

Deficiency is
human.

In fact it is the nature of love ever to strive to raise the lower to its own level of strength and intelligence. The wider the difference of attain-

Human love
rises above it.

ment between lover and loved the greater the passion of self-giving, of grace and of active loyalty, —where the love is real and wise. No more is needed. We don't speak of reconciliation or atonement here.

So does
divine love.

This surely is the nature of God's relationship to His finite children, apart from alienation and clash of will. Human ignorance and finite weakness, as such, are no bar to the free intercourse of love in the shape of God's uplifting grace answered by man's grateful response. God, who Himself gives men life and Himself not only knows but is primarily responsible for the natural conditions under which it is lived, is at least as just, as generous, and as patient in His love as the good mother.

It is not
difference of
taste or ideal.

There is another kind of difference, which, though it does not enter into the relations between God and man, does often arise in our human relationships, and puts a greater strain on love than immaturity does or the imperfection which we have just been considering. This also arises out of the natural limitations of the finite mind, and though we should not think of using the word atonement in this connection, it often calls for something like reconciliation and does illustrate the principle of atonement if only by contrast. I mean the differences in taste and opinion which in important matters may lead to something of alienation and separation. Even close friends may come to differ through the adoption of

different ideals, intellectual or aesthetic, social or political, through contrary judgments as to what is desirable or fitting under certain circumstances, as to means for effecting common moral ends. And the differences may be deep and far-reaching, may lead even to conflict. The more fundamental the cause of difference, and the more it enters into the organisation of the common life, the more serious will the results be in their interference with the natural interchange of good will in spiritual union among men.

But in all differences of this kind, even very serious differences, if there be in the personal love something of that wisdom and patience that comes from breadth and inclusiveness of view and sympathy, love may still be without interruption. One of the greatest and most useful disciplines of life, one which begins early in home and school, and persists throughout life, is given by these differences. It is by these differences, as we meet them with love and good will, that our minds get enriched and cleared, our sympathies widened, and we learn to see the world from other points of view as well as from our own. We learn the lesson, invaluable for social life, of each man's right to have his own tastes and to form his own opinions and live by his own convictions. If the differences are too deep, or the temper too unstable to stand the strain, there may be an agreement to differ, or even to separate, without loss of mutual respect, good will, and loyalty. The common life may be the richer and the stronger for the differences.

Human love
rises superior
to these.

These
differences
add to the
wealth of the
spiritual
world.

No one finite mind can well hold all the truth of things, and if each can learn loyalty to the truth he sees, and yet maintain love and good will to his fellow who sees another side of the truth, both are the better, and the world is better, for their loyalty to truth and their love to one another. Love finds a way, not to dissolve the differences by one side giving way, but to combine the opposing elements in a wider and richer unity.

CHAPTER II

THE real trouble in the world of spiritual beings is a difference of a kind quite other than those we have been considering, though it is often confused with them. It is the difference caused by what is called Sin. The difference made by sin.

We have seen how differences between human spirits caused by immaturity in its various stages, and by the natural and necessarily varying limitations of human knowledge and interest, are continually being more or less easily and successfully bridged by the sympathy and patience of parent, teacher, friend, and neighbour. It is all part of the process by which every child of man grows up and enters into his heritage of good will and knowledge, attains insight into the world of nature and of his fellows, and in turn passes on to others what he has received, with whatever he may have gained in addition. These differences belong to human finitude and the conditions of human life and growth for which man is not responsible. There is in them no reproach, no shame. They call for teaching, with whatever of good will and insight, skill, energy, and patience man can acquire, rather than for reconciliation. More than human deficiency of knowledge.

They do not affect at all the relationship between man and God (whose love is *ex hypothesi* wiser and stronger than that of the best human parent, teacher, or friend) to cause anything of alienation there, to call for reconciliation, atonement.

A fundamental
difference

But in Sin we have come to a cause of difference that allows of no compromise, admits of no resolution in a higher or wider unity; that calls for more than sympathetic comprehensiveness of view, more than patient teaching; that makes an absolute demand on the one side and calls for complete surrender on the other, if free intercourse of love is to be attained or restored. It affects, and, it is felt, *ought* to affect, seriously all human relationships so far as they are moral. It affects most of all the relationship between God and man, causing just that alienation which men feel to require reconciliation, a reconciliation so important and often so difficult that the special term atonement is commonly used to describe it.

affecting God
and man.

The essence
of *sin* in
moral nature

The difference and alienation caused by sin arises from the very nature of morality, from the nature of man and of God as moral, from that moral obligation which we saw in our discussion of punishment (II. p. 49) binds all moral beings to one another and (as we saw in I. p. 26) is a most important aspect of all the activities of moral personalities. Man is in our experience moral as being under, and knowing himself to be under, the law of the ideal, the ideal of man in his relationship to the external world, to himself and to his

of man as
subject to law

fellows, and to God considered as the ground of his and of the world's existence, as the source and maintainer of the ideal and its law. God is in our thought and conception moral as being in all His action, in relationship to the world and to all moral and spiritual beings, self-governed by the law of the ideal, the ideal of His own perfect nature, that is, in Christian thought, the ideal of holy love. God and man therefore are both moral, and moral in the same sense, as consciously subject to the law of the same ideal, the ideal of holy love. But whereas man is in actual experience and history faced with the law of an ideal infinitely greater than himself, a law he does not make, of which he only gradually becomes aware, to which even so far as he becomes aware of it he only very imperfectly and with difficulty brings himself and his impulses and desires into subjection, he conceives of God as the actualised ideal, the spirit whose free activities constitute the ideal. It is God's will, men feel, that determines for man the natural conditions under which he learns and strives after the ideal, and it is God's holy love manifested towards men that not only sets before man his ideal but constitutes the obligation on man to strive after it, and, so far as it is communicated, revealed, to him, so far as he conceives and accepts it, begets in him the desire and the power to realise and embody it, to actualise it in his own activities.

It is in relation to this law, the law of the ideal, the law of man's ideal in his relationships with the

and of God
as subject and
author of law.

Sin in
relation to
this law.

world of nature and of his fellows and with God, a law based on and (*mutatis mutandis*) identical with the free activities of God in His relationships, the law of His actual nature and His will of holy love,—it is in relation to this law that man's sin shows itself and atonement has to be made. Sin is a breach of this law, the law of the ideal, a breach of that moral obligation to obey and maintain the law of the ideal which we saw to be universal, touching all moral beings, human and other than human, in all their relationships.

All sin is
breach of
ideal law.

But not every
breach of
ideal law
is sin

though some
theories would
put it so

and the
awakened
conscience
does not
justify itself.

But though every sin is a breach of the law of the ideal, and therefore, on the religious hypothesis, contrary to the will of God, it does not by any means follow that every breach of this law is sin; nor does it by any means follow that all sinful breaches of the law are equally sinful, notwithstanding isolated passages of Scripture on which some theological theories of sin have been based. There is doubtless something attractive about the view that every breach of the law of the ideal, every divergence from the ideal which is God's will for man, is sin. There is something of logical completeness about it, classing together all the things that injure human life, all the acts and happenings that wise love, human and divine, would save us from. There is something about it also that suits the temper of the awakened conscience which has come to see human life in the light of the divine ideal. The more enlightened the conscience, and the more it is laid hold of by the

ideal, the less will it be disposed to claim a righteousness of its own before the ideal, the more genuinely humble it will be. This is due to the very nature of the ideal, at any rate of the Christian ideal, as well as to the infinite difference between the height of the ideal and any man's actual attainment.

The awakened and instructed Christian conscience, however, is not only characterised by humility in its own judgment of itself and by absence of all complacency and self-satisfaction. In its humility it seeks and learns to be also just in its judgment. Judgment, absolutely just judgment, complete understanding and accurate valuation of the good and of the evil in men's characters and actions, is as much the function of the holy love we attribute to God as forgiveness is. Indeed, adequate just judgment is an essential condition, we might even say a part, of really effectual forgiveness. The deepest part of the forgiven sinner's satisfaction and confidence would be lacking if he suspected that the worst in him were not fully known to the forgiving judge, justly weighed and condemned, as well as forgiven. There is no room in our conception of God for indiscriminateness either of condemnation or of approval. So must the ideal man's judgment also be marked by insight and discernment. The essence of just judgment is discrimination.

Holy love
must judge.

God's
judgment
necessary as
His
forgiveness.

God's
judgment
discriminates

We must therefore, to be clear about the essential nature of sin and the alienation it causes, try to distinguish between breaches of the law of the

We also must
discriminate
sins.

ideal which are sinful and those which are not sinful, at any rate we must distinguish between the more and the less sinful. It is the more necessary because when theology has allowed itself to be confused here, in dealing with sin and atonement, it has been apt to create a prejudice against itself and against religion too, as though they followed principles alien to the common moral consciousness and sound human ethics. Happily for our common moral sanity men have, within the limits of human knowledge of character, been able to discriminate more or less satisfactorily between various sins and various degrees of sinfulness. We may get help here too towards greater clearness in theology from the common human experience, especially the experience of parents, teachers, and all who have to administer discipline in accordance with any reasoned ethical rule and law.

In common
experience we
do
discriminate.

How men do
discriminate.

It will be sufficient for our purpose to mention the most obvious principles whereby in ordinary human relationships men do distinguish different degrees of sinfulness in human actions. In as far as they are true principles they will be universal in their application and should throw light on the judgment of God and its effect upon the relations of God and man in the matter of sin, alienation, and atonement. These principles need no elaboration.

Negative canon

They are both negative and positive. Negatively, the amount or degree of sinfulness in an

act does not depend on the natural consequences, or the actual consequences, of the act, except so far as these are known or at any rate foreseen, and willed or desired by the doer. In a world like ours, a world of real things, forces, and persons, outward acts will have certain effects, physical and perhaps psychological, according to the actual condition and disposition of the things, forces, and persons concerned, along lines of natural law which are independent of the will of the person who acts. The effects may be painful to himself or to others, may bring disaster and even death to himself or to others, and yet there may possibly be little or no sin in the act. The common moral judgment of intelligent people expressed in their laws clearly distinguishes, *e.g.* between murder, manslaughter, and death which some one has caused accidentally and involuntarily. A child may with absolute innocence set forces in motion which produce untold suffering. Even were the act one of wilful disobedience the sin is measured not by the suffering caused, but by the knowledge and realisation of wrongness in the act. Suffering has many causes and many effects. We have seen that there is no measurable proportion between suffering and the sinfulness of the sufferer; neither can the suffering caused measure the sinfulness of the act that causes the suffering.

Responsibility begins with knowledge and with power to choose and act in accordance with the knowledge. These are the positive principles by which men measure, so far as they can measure,

Positive canon.

Sin varies with knowledge and freedom.

the sinfulness of human actions. Without knowledge and some freedom of choice and action in accordance therewith there can be neither moral virtue nor its opposite, no just ground of praise or blame, no real sin or guilt. The knowledge involved is knowledge of the facts, which are the material and the conditions of the action, and knowledge of the law, the law of the ideal, which gives the end and quality of the action. It is true that ignorance itself may be blameworthy and then has to be judged and dealt with accordingly as such. But in the end the sinfulness of an act depends on the knowledge possessed by the doer and the quality of the act of will in relation to that knowledge. In what are apparently identical acts, by different people at the same time or by the same person at different times, there may be infinitely different degrees of sinfulness or of virtue in proportion to the amount of knowledge the doer has and the deliberateness and singleness of purpose put into the good or evil choice and action upon that knowledge. This is common enough experience; and, though we may often distrust our own common experience and sense of judgment in particular cases, Jesus' own clear word (Lk. xii. 47, 48) about the many stripes which should fall on the servant who 'knew his lord's will, and made not ready, nor did according to his will,' as compared with 'him that knew not,'—this at least supports the principle in our common sense of judgment which makes us discriminate between the sinfulness

Jesus' own view of degrees of sinfulness.

of various acts according to the knowledge with which the act of will is done. "To whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required."

And this infinite variety of human sins in respect of their sinfulness, with the need for discrimination in judgment, is none the less real and true because of the difficulty, even the impossibility, of human judgments and estimates of sins being entirely adequate and just. Man can see but little of his fellow's whole act and its conditions, and that mainly the external features. What constitutes the inner quality and value of each act, for good or for ill, for its due meed of praise or blame, he can only roughly guess at, important though it is that his judgment should be right and sound. We are not now concerned with human judgment except so far as it throws light upon God's. Our human estimates of the sinfulness of men's actual sins may be, and doubtless often are, as faulty as we conceive God's judgment to be accurate and just. But when we see wise human love judging human action with patience and understanding, unprejudiced by its own pains, discriminating the degrees of sinfulness, making allowances for natural weakness and ignorance, but also revealing to the erring one the significance of his choices for good and ill, not glossing over wrong, yet ever seeking to quicken the love of the ideal, seeking this end before all else and at all cost, even at cost of pain to himself and to the object of his love, then we see something of the nature of God's holy love

Sinfulness of an act independent of man's inability to assess it.

God's judgment *ex hypothesi* just

in its
allowances

and in its
severity.

working in judgment. And it is our assurance of the adequate knowledge, perfect discrimination, and absolute justice of God's judgment that gives us confidence. 'He knoweth our frame,' as none other can. He knows, as none other can, what of a man's divergences from the ideal is due to necessary human deficiencies, immaturity and ignorance; and how much of a man's ignorance and immaturity is unnecessary and blameworthy; and on whom the responsibility and the blame really rests, whether it be on the individual man himself or on others who might have guided and instructed him. And while man trusts God, as he can trust no other, to make due allowance for all the conditions that lie outside the man's own will, he trusts Him also, as he can trust no other, to make no undue allowance, to know and to treat sin as sin and to deal adequately with it. This is equally essential in our conception of God as embodying ideal justice, at any rate to the instructed conscience. "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?"

Our faith in
this justice.

Let it be frankly admitted at once that this absolute justice in judgment is an ideal, a concept; an essential element in our concept of God, but a matter of faith rather than sight and actual experience. Not only has man failed to reach it in himself, even the best of men, but he has not been able to see it, to demonstration, in God Himself, so far as God's judgments are open to observation. That is man's deepest trouble. Perhaps it is not to be expected that he should so

see it. That might turn Faith and Religion into Science, quantitative demonstration, and calculation, which are less valuable things. But be that as it may, man with his limited vision does not see God's judgment complete, and is often therefore perplexed and sad. I venture to think he can never expect to see the true lines of it so long as he looks upon suffering as the proof or measure of man's sin or of God's disapproval and moral judgment. Mysteries there will naturally be in the dealings of God with man. Not only is God too great, man also is too great, actually and potentially, and the world too complex, for us to be able to put their moral relations into a simple formula. But we need not make unnecessary mystery and cause unnecessary mental suffering by clinging to a fallacy in the teeth of our commonest moral experience.

Most hindered by wrong views of pain.

These false views cause unnecessary difficulties.

But the immediate point of our argument here is that sins differ infinitely in respect of their sinfulness. However difficult, nay, impossible, it may be for human judgment adequately to weigh and measure that sinfulness, yet it is one very important side of man's function as a moral being to learn to discriminate and judge aright, just as it is an essential part of our faith in God as a moral being that He does discriminate and judge with absolute justice, and that He does and will render to every man according to his works. There is nothing arbitrary, we are sure, in the moral world, about sin, its consequences and the way it has to be reckoned with and dealt with, as there is nothing

Justice is discriminating.

Nothing arbitrary in moral or in physical worlds.

arbitrary, we believe, in the physical world, where each particle of matter has its nature and its due weight and place. We need therefore, in theorising about sin as well as in practical dealing with it, discrimination in judgment. To think of or to treat all sin as equally sinful and equally rebellion against God, as in theologising men have sometimes tended to do, or, on the other hand, to treat all sin lightly because in certain bodily conditions a man is, *e.g.* very liable to ill temper or to unchaste thoughts, is only to confuse judgment and endanger our moral sanity. “Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?”¹

¹ Lk. xii. 57.

CHAPTER III

BUT there is this common element in all sin, ^{The} marking it off from mere ignorance either of fact ^{differentia} of sin. or of law, and from the imperfection inherent in the finite nature of man. This common element, the essence of sin, is a law more or less known but ignored, acknowledged but refused. It is not ignorance but knowledge, knowledge unused or defied, darkness preferred to light. It is not ^{Neglect or} childish immaturity and weakness but man's misuse ^{defiance of} of the strength he has, strength wasted through ^{known law of} easy-going slackness or misdirected to ill purposes. ^{goodness.} It is not human helplessness, but proffered strength and help scouted or resisted, the divine ideal ignored and scorned, right defied, self will enthroned in opposition to it.

And if this is at all a just account of sin in its essential conditions and nature, if it is a more or less conscious attitude, set, or act of the will in opposition to the law of the ideal, an opposition ranging from dull, inert, passive neglect to active, organised, persistent refusal and rejection of the law, it will be at once clear why the difference it causes between the sinner and all good men as such, and especially between the sinner and God, is so serious. It cannot but cause alienation.

It is the
contrary of
virtue

For just as sin in its varying degrees is the more or less conscious and deliberate set of the will *against* the acknowledged law of the ideal, so moral goodness or virtue is in its varying degrees the conscious set of the will *in accordance with* that same law, the loyal willing acceptance of the law of the ideal so far as it is known, and the more or less energetic action in accordance with it. Sin is the dissociation of the will, the self, from the law of the ideal; moral goodness is the willing identification of the self, its desires, purposes, and activities, with that law. The one is therefore essentially a set of the will, of the self, along a line directly contrary to that of the other, in relation to the law of the ideal, the moral obligation which is to moral beings the most important and fundamental thing in life.

in what is
most
fundamental.

It leads to
personal
alienation

And such is the nature of the moral law, the law of the ideal, and its relation to the mind and will of man as a moral being that this contrary opposition of sin and goodness leads to flat contradiction of will, so far as the mind and will of the sinner goes, between him and God and between him and good men as such. God and good men as such are in the sinner's mind associated and identified with the law he ignores or rejects. His opposition to the law involves, therefore, so far as it goes, difference and alienation in his mind and will from those whom he identifies with it. So that in respect of any one sinful activity of spirit, of will, choice, or act, as touching any one part of the law of the

as persons
identify
themselves
with law.

ideal, the sinner adopts, more or less clearly and more or less deliberately, this attitude of flat contradiction of will in relation to the good will, the will of God and good men. It is not simply that the good spirit, loyal to the law of the ideal, wills one thing and the sinful spirit wills something else, something different. That might happen without clash or contradiction, for the wills might be operating in different planes or in respect of different things. The trouble about sin is that just in respect of the law of the ideal, as understood and acknowledged by the sinner and in his mind identified with the will of God and of good men as such, the sinner ignores or defies that which he conceives God and good men to will. They, he conceives more or less clearly, will A ; he, more or less clearly and deliberately, wills its contradictory, not-A.

And from this contradiction of will, and from the alienation it involves in the disloyal mind and will from the loyal, there is only one escape. The good spirit cannot give up its own loyalty or lower its own standard of right for the sake of atonement and unity. That would be fatal to its own harmony with the law of the ideal and would tend to weaken still further the loyalty of the wrongdoer without any guarantee of producing the unity of spirit desired. It would be spreading and deepening the disease, not curing it. The only cure of the disease and discord, the only escape from the contradiction, the only remedy for the alienation, is the giving up by the sinner, the disloyal spirit, of its attitude

The only cure
is repentance
by the sinner.

Repentance
towards the
law of
goodness,

Involving
change of
mind towards
good spirits.

of opposition to the law of its ideal, that is, the ceasing from its sin, the willing identification or re-identification of itself with the law. This change of mind and will, *μετάνοια*, repentance, with regard to the law and its claims, carries with it a change of mind and will with regard to those persons, divine and human, who are in the sinner's mind associated and identified with the law of the ideal, so far as the association and identification go. It is an end of the alienation in the sinner's mind and will from God and the good man as such. As sin *is* in itself the sinner's distance and alienation from God and goodness and human spirits in so far as they are loyal, so repentance *is* the abolition, just so far as there is repentance, of that distance and alienation.

Three
qualifications
of statement
about the
nature of sin.

But, before going further into the nature of all sin as constituting need for atonement and into the nature and method of atonement, some qualification may seem to be required of the statement that sin is flat contradiction of will as between the sinful and the good spirit as such and leads inevitably to alienation, indeed *is* itself alienation between them.

Sin does not
imply total
depravity of
man's will.

First, sin as opposition, even as contradictory opposition, to the law of the ideal and to those who are identified with it, does not necessarily imply that the whole will, the whole self, with all its activities, is in this attitude of opposition and contradiction, or that the opposition of the will is to the whole law of the ideal. This is implicit

in the argument of the previous chapter about the varying degrees of sinfulness in a sinful act. Here we touch it on the psychological side.

Every moral act is an act of will, and the sinfulness of an act is the sinfulness of the will so acting. Now it is true that the will is in a sense one and indivisible. It is not a *part* of the self or personality, separable from the feelings and the intelligence, except by abstraction and for convenience of description. It is rather the *whole self acting*, in response to its feelings and its thought. We feel hunger, decide by our ideas of the fitness of things whether and when and how to satisfy the need, and then act accordingly. But even in such a simple case as this, and still more in more complex questions, there may be different, conflicting, sometimes even contradictory impulses, wishes and desires, motives, plans, purposes and ideals, appealing to the self. The hunger, the desire to eat, the desire to abstain and to go on with something else, for various good reasons, physical, ideal, perhaps religious, and a hundred other considerations, are all present more or less clearly to the mind, and the man must choose. From motives simple or complex he acts or decides not to act, or he cannot 'make up his mind' and lets himself drift along the line of least resistance.

The will is one psychologically,

but acts upon objects infinitely varied in various ways.

But in any case this is his act, his choice, his response to the call of the situation, whatever the standard or ideal by which he acts; and by his choices, his actions and his inactions, by his responses to his desires and by his identification of

Must always act for good or ill.

Life is a
succession of
moral
activities.

himself with one or other of his ideals, the quality of his self, his will, his character, is so far both revealed and modified. This is the process of man's moral growth and development. The necessity of choice is constant, the opportunity of action for good or for ill belongs to every moment of conscious life.

In man
moral unity
has to be won;

But the point to notice just now is that however one and indivisible the will, the self, is in itself it does not in our experience display one single quality, either good or evil, in its actions. We can hardly conceive of any human spirit as either wholly good or wholly bad. God is, as we conceive Him, absolutely one with the law of the ideal, for, *ex hypothesi*, it is the law of His own nature of holy love and His final will for man. And it is an essential part of our Christian faith that Jesus Christ was also absolutely self-identified with the law of the ideal as the will of God. Some good men have attained something of such unity of will and action in accordance with the ideal. None has to our knowledge reached it. If any in their best moments have felt they have attained it none has found it easy to maintain it. It is the final prize of man's high calling towards which he presses, the goal, not the starting-point of the spiritual life.

his character
has to be
made and
proved.

This is man's probation and spiritual history, the race he is set to run, the good fight he is set to fight. Our human life as we know it is man's present opportunity of effecting this unification of his spirit, and shows infinitely varied degrees of

success and failure. Every fresh experience, every new moment, brings its varied material and its new point of view and challenges the man to understand and master it, to bring his impulses and desires and his reactions and responses into organic unity and subjection to the highest purpose he knows, *i.e.* to the law of his ideal, which embraces the greatest good he can conceive for himself and for his fellows.

But if none, not even the best of men, has reached the goal, if experience in the light of the ideal is ever revealing fresh victories to be won and calling for constant watchfulness and more complete self-identification with and surrender to the ideal, we cannot, on the other hand, conceive of any human spirit, at any rate, as completely antagonistic to the whole law. While a man of many real and obvious virtues may in some secret chamber of his self be refusing the claim of the ideal on his allegiance and may in consequence lose the peace, harmony, and health of his own spiritual life, suffer pangs of alienation from God, and be weakened in his best endeavours after the good of others, experience also shows that even one who obviously offends against many points even of his own ideal may have not a few real virtues and be 'not far from the kingdom of heaven.' These virtues in the sinner do not balance or cancel out or mitigate his sin and the mischief of it, internal and external, to himself and to others. They do not prevent the discord and alienation which it brings. Sin is still and always sin and alienation

None wholly good

or wholly bad.

The saint may sin ;

the sinner may have virtues.

Sin
everywhere
alike in
nature and
effects.

of the spirit that harbours it from God and goodness, and, so far as it is recognised and allowed or persisted in, it tends to infect the whole life, the life of the individual and of the society. The self divided in its allegiance is for all high spiritual purposes so far impotent, unstable and useless. But the wrong of it is just what it is, and, however difficult it is, as we saw, to measure, it is best dealt with for what it is. One of the first necessities for the medical practitioner and all concerned in the fight against disease is a just diagnosis of the mischief and just discrimination of its causes. It is enough for us to recognise here that the sinful spirit, human or other than human, is sinful just so far as it is in its attitude and activities set against the law of the ideal in whole or in part.

Men may be
mistaken
about the law
of the ideal.

Second, there may always arise, in human minds, errors and misunderstandings in any particular case, as to what is the right, what *is* the law of the ideal, what *is* the will of God ; and men may with good intentions be at cross purposes in their contention for the right. Moslem and Christian, Catholic and Protestant, Autocrat and Socialist, may honestly fight for opposing elements in the ideal. So incomplete and partial is man's knowledge, so fallible even his instincts and intuitions, needing constant revision and correction by experience and reflection, that countless practical difficulties and theoretical perplexities arise. One man may be honestly convinced that celibacy is

God's will and the only right condition of life for him, or that he ought to cut himself off from communion with those who hold some other conviction, while another man, or even the same man at a different time with wider experience and deeper reflection on it, may have a contrary conviction. Now things are what they are apart from men's opinions about them, and the will of God as man's ideal is what it is independent of man's misconceptions and errors; and men's errors may have serious consequences, physical and psychological, in the individual life and in human societies; and men may be in varying degrees responsible and blameworthy for their misconceptions and errors.

But all this possible and actual misconception and error about the ideal and God's will for man, while it may alter a man's action and the consequences which follow from it, and may alter the judgment men form of it and their estimate of the sinfulness of the act, does not alter the actual sinfulness of the act, which is always relative to the knowledge and purpose of the person acting, nor does it diminish the seriousness of the difference and alienation caused by the sin. It does emphasize what is always abundantly clear, *i.e.* the extreme difficulty, nay, the impossibility, of our forming any exact estimate of the sinfulness of other people's actions which seem contrary to our own convictions of right, and so it emphasizes the need of charity in judgment. But after all, the sinfulness of an act is what it is, though we cannot assess it rightly and though the sinner himself may be more or less

Mistakes as to fact do not alter the sinfulness of will.

They do show human judgment to be fallible.

The sin is in the will

so also the
alienation

not in the
consequences.

God the only
just judge.

Mistakes about
facts do not
diminish the
alienation of
the disloyal
mind.

Disloyalty
involves
alienation.

mistaken in his conception of what the ideal and the will of God is. So also with the alienation which is caused by the sin or is an aspect of it. It also is what it is independently of our human measurements, independently even of the sinner's own estimate of it. For the sinfulness of an act cannot, as we have seen, be measured by the suffering, external or internal, caused by the act, even where the suffering should be measurable; nor can the alienation be so measured. God alone can measure them, who, *ex hypothesi*, knows the conditions, the thoughts and desires of the heart and their history, the actual relation of the mind and will to the ideal and its law. What is important for us to see here is that, putting aside abnormal and inhuman perversions of conscience, however mistaken a man may be as to whether and why a particular act or course of action is right, *i.e.* in accordance with the law of the ideal and the will of God, if he sets himself in opposition to that will as he conceives it the opposition will produce *in his mind* effects as serious as would be produced if he were not mistaken, so far as alienation from God goes and from those whom he considers good men as being identified with the law of the ideal which he opposes.

Disloyalty to an acknowledged law, however imperfectly the law is conceived, must in the nature of things cause alienation not only from the law but from the persons who are in the disloyal mind associated and identified with the law. And this distance and alienation is different in kind from

every other difference. Notwithstanding mistakes as to matters of fact it is in the mind of the sinner a flat contradiction of will about the same thing, in the sphere of his conscience, which is to moral and spiritual beings the most important sphere, side, or aspect, of his life experience. In some particular point the sinner conceives the law of the ideal, the right, the will of God, whichever way he puts it to himself, as making some demand on him, to do or to abstain, and with more or less clearness and deliberateness he sets the law at nought, ignores it or defies it. That is sin and alienation. Mistakes in the sinner's mind as to what the will of God and law of the ideal is may make his sin less disastrous in its outward effects, may make it more possible to bring about reconciliation by simple instruction. Clearness and sufficiency of knowledge as to God's will we have seen increases the sinfulness of opposition thereto and makes reconciliation more unlikely and more difficult, but the mistake while it lasts does not mitigate the sinner's alienation and sin in his own mind.

That brings us to the third point of qualification. The alienation of sin is the sinner's own attitude of mind and spirit, his own act and set of will, apart from any effect it may have in the mind and will of the loyal spirit. If there is alienation there it is different in kind. Obviously enough the more sinful the sinner is, *i.e.* the more consciously, deliberately, and persistently, he sets at nought

The alienation is in the sinner's mind and will,

the law of the ideal, the greater is his alienation from God, whose will it is, at any rate to him, and from all good men as such, who in his mind at any rate are identified with it. The alienation is the personal side or aspect of the sin.

not in the
loyal spirit in
the same sense;

Between the loyal and the disloyal, so long as the disloyalty persists, there cannot but be alienation in respect of the disloyalty. This is inherent in the nature of sin and of goodness, which are contrary qualities of personal acts of will in reference to a law or standard. But the alienation is not something the loyal spirit makes or adopts. He will recognise it, as he becomes aware of it, with infinite regret and sorrow in proportion to the purity of his own loyalty. He cannot but be profoundly moved by it. It touches him vitally. For the sake of the ideal, for love's sake, he must react on it. And just in so far as a human love, of father, mother, friend, takes on the quality of the love of God revealed in Christ it will not be destroyed by the sin; it will rather be stirred to more intense activity to break down the alienation, to abolish it, to rescue and redeem the loved sinner from the ruinous and alienating power of sin, at all cost. But the alienation it has to overcome is in the sinful will, not in the holy, loving will. That remains unchanged though not unaffected, a will, a character, a nature, a heart, a spirit, whose activity is, ideally, holy love. True, the intercourse between the two which would be natural and proper to love and loyalty is impossible in the nature of things to love and disloyalty. The

action and behaviour of the loyal one will be different though the good will remains unaltered. It will be the action and behaviour proper to the relationship of holy love and disloyalty. What that action and behaviour is or should be we can only hope to come to any understanding of by what we may see of the action of God and His holy love in Christ towards sinful men.

This we hope to get light upon soon. For the immediate present we are concerned only with the nature of sin and the alienation it introduces into moral relationships. And we have seen enough to understand its seriousness. Even in its slight beginnings, when it may be a mere passing impulse or mood, it cannot be ignored. It is always important and dangerous. And the danger of it is not due to something outside of itself. Just as we saw the alienation is not something created or adopted or maintained by the loyal spirit, but is inherent in the sin, *is* the quality and characteristic of the sinful spirit as such, exactly to the extent of its sinfulness, in fact, the alienation *is* the sin, so neither does the danger lie in some penalty of suffering that may be more or less arbitrarily attached to the sin, to take effect in the near or distant future. The danger is in the nature of the sin itself as a disease, a disorder of the spirit affecting it in all its functions and relations. There is what is sometimes called a law of sin, which has all the universality, the precision, and the certainty of a Law of Nature, such as the Law of Gravitation in physics. In the psychological sphere and in

hence the
danger of sin

not because of
its consequence
but because
of itself.

the moral sphere, just as in the physical, every act has its effect, or rather tends to produce a certain effect, according to its own nature, whether it be slow or swift in its operation, and whether the effects be obvious or more or less hidden from observation.

CHAPTER IV.

THERE are three characteristics of sin which are important for our purpose and so call for notice.

(a) Sin tends to extend and propagate itself in the individual life and in the social life by suggestion and afterwards by force of habit. (a) Self propagation by suggestion and habit

An act of body or of will, whether it arise from natural impulse or from external suggestion, tends to repetition, unless good reason and sufficient will come into play against it. And the act is itself a suggestion, both to the doer himself and to any who sees or knows of it. Habits are soon formed, both of body and mind, and though they don't determine action, they make action easier in one direction or another. They tend to create or strengthen a disposition. Happily there are good habits as well as bad habits. But an evil habit, which may be so much a habit that the man is hardly conscious of it, is a constant menace to the society of which he is a member. It may, by way of suggestion, strongly affect the more impressionable minds and create a drift which tends to lower the moral level of the whole society as such. in society.

(b) Unfortunately sin falls in with the natural tendency in man to drift, to follow the line of least (b) Drift-inertia dangerous

in physical
life,

resistance. There is in the world of Nature the downward, katabolic tendency, the inertia of matter, symbolised by the Law of Gravitation, and the law of life is one of constant active effort in the teeth of this tendency. The two are not ultimately antagonistic, for life can make use of the downward tendency for its purposes, but life maintains and enriches itself only by effort and endeavour in spite of the tendency to take things easily, by catching at advantage and concentrating energy and intelligence on its purposes. Man must put aside sloth and ease of body and mind, and, warned by danger and stimulated by hope and the love of his fellows, must respond to the needs of the situation and to the call of the ideal of better things. All the world, with its suggested hopes of good and fears of ill, is full of inducements to endeavour. All the world, with its inertia and its drift, makes endeavour difficult and progress no necessary process but an enterprise and a task. Degeneration and death are easy. Inaction is all that is needed. This is the lesson of evolution.

in spiritual
life.

So also in the moral world. The unregulated natural impulses, whether tending towards positive self-seeking or towards negative indifference and sloth, constitute the material, as it were, of human character and require to be shaped, ordered, organised, in accordance with an ideal. Left to themselves or organised on a false or wrong ideal they bring disaster, whether from destructive activity or from inactivity and decay. Apart from spirit and the law of the spirit,—whether we

like to call it human or divine it is the spirit of life with its ideal and its energy, stirring, shaping, organising, moralising human nature—there is a downward, katabolic tendency which means ultimately spiritual death, *i.e.* death of the man's spirit to the human or divine ideal and its energy. All spiritual life, all moral energy and power, consists in active response of a spiritual being to the call of the ideal, to the categorical imperative of the moral law, to the good law and will of God, whichever way we like best to express to ourselves that first and ultimate obligation under which every man lives. Every advance is made in the teeth of the forces of moral inertia in a man's own spirit and in others'.

Spiritual life
= ideal and
energy.

To embody the ideal in his own life and that of the society is the greatest of all enterprises, calling for alertness and concentration and the utmost spiritual activity. All the world contributes stimulus, his hopes for himself and for all he loves, all his loyalties and all his fears. God and Heaven above and Hell beneath, and whatever vision he has of the kingdom of God in Heaven and on earth, call to him. And all the world, with its inducements to error and to ease, its hostility and its inertia, its threats and its laughter, combine to weigh him down. Degeneration and death here too are easy. It is enough not to strive. Let natural impulse have its way. Follow the line of least resistance. Disobey the vision till it fades away. Close the eyes to the light and it will sooner or later cease to disturb. This is death.

Neglect as
criminal as
defiance.

More
dangerous.

And this is the nature of sin. This is its danger. It is not only the positive wrong men do but the good they see and leave undone. To ignore the ideal set before us is a breach of its law as fatal and mischievous in its moral effects on oneself and on others as any violent crime could be—it is an example much more likely to be followed, tending to deaden rather than shock and awaken the conscience. And it is in these ways that sin tends to propagate itself in the individual life and in society. The insidiousness of its attack often reduces a man to servitude before he is well aware. It is very necessary to beware of the early stages.

(c) Sin a cause
of suffering.

(c) The third characteristic of sin is its tendency to cause pain and suffering. This is, if I may be allowed the paradox, its one redeeming feature. We have seen reason why we cannot regard all pain and suffering as punishment for sin. Beside the fact that much pain and suffering seems, so far as our experience goes, to have no causal connection with human sin, even the pain and suffering that *are* caused by sin do not fall only on the guilty persons, or on them in any degree proportionate to their guilt, sometimes, in this life at any rate, are not seen to fall on them at all. But whether we think of suffering as sin's punishment or not, and on whomsoever the suffering falls, it *does* fall. In one way or another, sooner or later but quite inevitably, sin does bring suffering in its train. There is nothing arbitrary or partial about it. It is a law, *the* law,

Suffering
an inevitable
result of sin.

of nature. And it is God's law. It expresses part of the truth of things, symbolises the nature of sin in itself and in its consequences—consequences to the sinner and to others associated with him. It expresses also something in the nature of God Himself and His righteousness, His attitude towards sin, the absolute contradiction between Himself and it. And the law is good. In the physical world we saw pain to be a great instrument of evolution, educating men and safeguarding them against things and actions dangerous to life before knowledge and moral self-control are sufficiently developed to keep men from unnecessary harm. So in the moral world, in man's weakness, it is good not only that many kinds of wrongdoing to which he is prone do obviously cause physical pain, but that all sin tends at any rate in the long run to bring disorganisation, unhappiness, and misery into the individual life and into the social life. How else so well could free man have been taught from earliest days of moral infancy the desirability of obedience to the best law known, and also through all probation the absolute imperative of God's will of holy love? From the first simple physical pain, or other mark of displeasure, used by a parent to turn a child from an incipient bad habit, to the fear of spiritual disorder and alienation that reinforces the wavering loyalty of a much tried servant of God, the pains and sufferings of the world are among the experiences men have come to be thankful for in proportion as they have met them with courage and good will.

By God's good will

beneficent
in physical
world,

in moral world.

Even the disproportion of suffering to guilt has its advantage

Even the irregularity about the incidence of suffering, the obvious and frequent disproportionateness of suffering to guilt, which has most distressed men's minds so long as they have looked on all suffering as a mark of God's displeasure, even this has its advantage. It saves virtue from the slur that has often been cast upon it, of being a mere selfish calculation of measurable pleasures and pains or a means of avoiding pain. Virtue undoubtedly does tend to lessen the suffering of the world. By combating all wrongdoing it combats the suffering that results from wrongdoing. And more than that, the nature of love is to spend itself in saving the loved from unnecessary suffering. So, if Jesus truly revealed the Father, works the holy love of God, the perfect sum of goodness; so, too, man's love, so far as he attains it, is ever at war with suffering. Only, the holier and wiser the love the more will moral good as an end be supreme over all other ends, and the fight against pain will be entirely secondary as compared with the fight against wrong. Especially in the good man's own case will he most willingly endure all sufferings if only God's purposes of holy love may be effected.

and the inevitability of this suffering also.

And that other terrible aspect of the law of sin, the absolute certainty of some one sooner or later suffering as the result of sin, also has its advantage. If anything in the world can startle the dull conscience, pierce the hard heart, and waken its sense of responsibility, it is the conviction, when it comes home to him with all the

relentless inevitability of a law of nature, that his sin must bring suffering, not only to himself but perhaps to others tied to him in that strange solidarity of human society, perhaps by the tenderest ties, who may be innocent of all guilt, yet bound by reason of this solidarity, perhaps even because of love, to suffer by his sin.

But, with all the help of pain and suffering in warning and turning men from evil courses, sin still remains. As we saw before, there are limits to the usefulness of pain and suffering as deterrent and remedial measures for saving men from wrongdoing. Man is still free. The best laws, human Man is free, or divine, may miss the desired result. The best-intentioned discipline may be misinterpreted. It is not only children that are short-sighted and resent restraint. The law of right may not only may go from bad to worse. be neglected, it may stir opposition and defiance. And with rejection of law blindness and hardness of heart tend to increase. Stirrings of reason and desire for good may grow weaker and less frequent. So things go from bad to worse. Sin and suffering heap up wretchedness, of mind if not of body, in all relationships, and infection spreads through society, resulting in hopeless disorder of active wickedness or of dull despair.

And this is not the result of law or of punishment. Yet the law is good It is in spite of law, i.e. in spite of the ideal. It is essentially the refusal of the ideal. And it is independent of punishment. It may come with punishment or without it. Man's punishment in

such case, if used at all, has been ineffectual. God's arrangement in the order of things, that sin shall bring suffering, has also been ineffectual, so far,—not from anything faulty in the arrangement, surely, however faulty man's punishment may sometimes be.

and must
continue.

But however ineffectual, so far as our experience goes, the arrangement must go on. If causes did not uniformly produce effects in the natural world and in the spiritual world there would be neither science nor morality. The law is good and necessary. It shows the ideal, points the way of life, warns men off from evil by suffering both immediate and deferred. One thing it cannot do, and would not if it could. No law can force virtue. Neither the law of the ideal nor the law of sin and suffering can *drive* men to righteousness. Forced goodness and forced love are meaningless terms. The love behind the law wants real love and goodness, real love of goodness ; can be satisfied with nothing less. If man at his worst is too great to be driven, love and goodness, holy love, must *win* him. Man won by holy love to his best is worth the cost, it appears.

Then how shall this be done ? We see the need. How shall it be met ?

CHAPTER V.

(3) Our third question. How in our actual experience does atonement seem to be effected?

Happily, "what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh," the love which is behind the law finds other means of doing.

If once it be assumed or admitted that love ^{Love behind Law.} *is* behind the law the next step to the meeting of man's need is fairly clear. And this we have seen good reason to believe. Law in both main senses of the word *is* good and necessary, God's own method of training spiritual beings who may come to understand something of His mind and enter of free choice into communion of thought and purpose with Himself. Law in the sense of the ideal, giving us the end, the way of life, laying its obligation upon us, is obviously a revelation of God's mind and will. Even the terrible law of sin and suffering and death, the natural law of the moral world, is also an expression of God's mind and will. All our argument so far points to this.

But where is there anything of love and goodness, ^{Even man's love intervenes} even amongst weak human spirits, that is content to make a law of righteousness for the child in the home or in the school, with however mild sanctions, ^{in home} and then leave the child facing the law and its

even in State.

sanctions without further concern or effort? So far as there is any real human wisdom and love the parent, the teacher, the friend, will use all means, will warn and instruct, persuade and entreat, reward, restrain or punish, to prevent waywardness developing into serious wrong, to save alienation and maintain good will, both in the personal relations and in relation to the law and the ideal. Even in the State, where law must be universal and more or less rigidly enforced, in proportion as there comes into men's minds the sense of solidarity and mutual care governments are less content to legislate and administer law without attempts to explain, persuade, and conciliate, and so to carry with them the good will of the governed.

Love moved
to highest
activity.

In all cases the greater the love and the greater the loyalty to the ideal of right the greater will be the activity of loyalty and love to prevent or to remove the alienation and so to save the erring one from coming within the operation of that terrible natural law of sin, suffering, and death, the slow but sure grinding "mills of God."

Love's
sacrifice,

its limits,

For this end no effort is too great, no suffering, no sacrifice (except that of loyalty and love) too great, to the spirit of holy love. One thing human love cannot do and divine love apparently does not do. It does not stop those mills or save man from them against his will,—and that surely for love's own sake, pursuing the greatest and most comprehensive ends of love. Everything proper to itself love will do. Only when all has been done

that it can do *can* love endure, only when love has done all it can has love any *right* to be content, its faith. to see itself apparently frustrated, its sacrifices in vain, and the loved one set to go through these mills. This may happen, does happen sometimes, to human love. Happy then is the man who by love has learnt to see, behind even those terrible laws, a love holier, stronger, more persistent, than his own.

But if man's imperfect love, not because of its No less true of God. imperfection but by the essential nature of love, must intervene by all means to win and save his children, his fellows, from the operation of this law of sin, from alienation from love and goodness, still more must God. The law of sin and suffering is His own will, the law of love and goodness is His. Can we see how the two work together?

How does He intervene to save men from that He intervenes natural law of sin and suffering and death, and unite them to Himself in that law of love and goodness, that holy love, which is His own nature and His will, His desire and purpose for men?

Clearly, effectual intervention must be along the along the line of need, i.e. of sin. line of the need, men's need. The alienation to be overcome, the contradiction of will to be ended, is that of sin. No compromise is possible. It is just this entire rightness, holiness of will in God, His holy law for man, that sinful man refuses by neglect or by defiance. It is therefore nothing in God's will or law that needs alteration or modification,—that is, *ex hypothesi* and in actual experience, the perfection of holy love. It is man's

The necessity
is for
repentance.

will, showing itself in opposition, even contradiction, that needs change. That is to say, man's sin calls for man's repentance, change of mind, change of attitude towards the ideal and its law, involving change of mind and attitude towards the person or persons identified in the mind of the penitent with the law.

Repentance
removes the
barrier,

These two, the ideal and the person or persons identified with it, are as essentially connected in the reconciliation of repentance as we saw they were in the alienation caused by sin. As sin known and persisted in was not only breach of the law, but involved contradiction of will between the sinner and those identified with the law, in respect of their loyalty to the ideal, and especially between the sinner and God, whose will the law and ideal was, so repentance, the giving up of opposition to the law, is the effecting or the restoring of the union between the sinner and the spirit faithful to the law, just in respect of this loyalty, which was the sole ground of contradiction of will. And this is especially true of the relation of the sinner to God. The good man's love and goodness may be deficient in many respects. His alienation from the sinner may have in it personal elements. His self-respect may have been 'hurt' by the offence, his interests may have suffered severely, his knowledge of the offender may be imperfect and his faith in the repentance weakened by unhappy experience. These things will limit the human reconciliation. In God's complete understanding and pure love there is no room for these limitations.

especially
between the
sinner and God.

The repentance therefore so far as it is real is satisfying. The forgiveness of God can be without reserve and the union complete in so far as the only barrier is gone.

But it is to be noticed that there is room for discrimination in repentances as in sins. So it is to be expected there will be differences of degree in reconciliation. Minds differ infinitely in content and in quality, in the extent of their interests and knowledge and in the organisation of this content. Some, loosely organised, are slow to see the bearings of a new principle, others, with material well in hand, judge more logically, rapidly, and conclusively. Differences of temperament, of emotional equipment and development, and of will power, natural or acquired, will make great differences in the response of the person concerned to the ideal and its claim and to the persons associated in his mind with it. All spiritual acts are personal and individual, their character and quality depending on the character and quality of the person.

So concrete an act, therefore, as a man's change of mind in respect to the ideal of love and goodness, in respect to God's will and law and those identified with it, is likely to vary greatly in the extent and thoroughness of the change. Repentance may be a passing impulse in an unstable character more or less easily moved to good or evil. It may be a deliberate act resulting from long thought and gradual realisation of the meaning of life. It may be the result of fear or of friendly persuasion. It

Repentances
differ

as minds
differ.

may arise from the attraction of the ideal or of a personal character identified with it. It may be thorough and complete. It may be timid and half-hearted. It may come in a flash or may end years of wavering will.

Repentance
opens new
spiritual
resources

It matters comparatively little how it comes so long as it comes, and so long as it is real so far as it goes. For the whole significance and essence of it is the relationship it establishes or reestablishes with a boundless source of spiritual wealth and power. It is a removal of barriers, a clearing of obstruction from a channel, which opens to the smallest and the greatest of men, to the best and to the worst, the infinite resources of the spiritual world, in which is included God and all that He has given and waits to give to men. Henceforth, so far as the repentance is real, it is not the man's past, his inheritance or his own addition thereto of good or of ill, that will determine his spiritual growth, but his receptiveness to the new spiritual life that offers itself to him. Whatever may have been the barriers, the obstruction, between himself and God,—be they thin or thick, great or small, more or less organised or casual,—when and so far as these are given up and repented of he is henceforth in uninterrupted communication with the source of all human strength and health. The spiritual inflow, the interchange of grace and loyalty, both in extent and in quality, is incalculable when the obstruction is removed. If all goes well he will enter progressively into fuller knowledge of and harmony with both the ideal, the good law, and the

incalculable.

persons identified with it, *i.e.* with God, with His will of holy love, and with men so far as they share in this will.

It is true that things do not always go well with the penitent. Repentance is not a fixed state but an act of will. Even reconciliation, while it creates a new status, is far more than a status. In repentance the spirit decides, begins, to act along a new line, a line of harmony with the obligation or law of the ideal, harmony with the will of the person identified with the ideal, the will of God.

But the man is still free to choose. He is constantly obliged to choose. That is life's condition and probation. He may go back on his repentance, back to his old enmity. Neglect or renewed hostility, refusal of some new light, some obligation from which he shrinks, may raise another barrier.

Man may go back.

Repentance needs constant renewal, for it means not only a change of direction but constantly renewed progress along the new direction, in spite of constant temptation to stop, diverge, or go back, constant difficulties to be overcome. It is not the reaching of the goal, but the first and necessary condition of reaching it, a turning and a moving in the direction of the right goal. The initial step taken, the journey, the race, the pilgrimage begun has to be followed through to the end. But, if the direction is kept, the purpose pursued, the changed mind kept constant, there is a spiritual power available, accessible, which makes possible active endurance to the end.

Repentance needs renewal

and active endurance

CHAPTER VI.

Does
repentance
meet the
whole need ?

Now, is man's need met ? is repentance all that is necessary to establish or reestablish the union of spirit, the relationship of uninterrupted love and intercommunication of grace on the one side and loyalty on the other, which is the end of creation, of revelation, of salvation, reconciliation, and redemption ?

Repentance
implies real
and effectual
faith.

It certainly does go a long way. In so far as repentance is real it includes what is meant by faith, which is often spoken of as the essential condition of salvation. For repentance not only implies some belief in facts about God and His will and law, but is in itself the taking up of an attitude of penitent love and loyalty and an activity marked by the same qualities. Here is faith, in the widest, deepest, most effectual sense of the word.

But how effect
repentance ?

The real difficulty is not the theoretical one, whether more than repentance and faith is necessary for the reconciliation of man and God, for the breaking down of the barrier caused by man's sin. Given true repentance it would seem that the reconciliation, the union of will, *is* effected. The trouble is not with the law, how it can be vindicated,

upheld. The law needs no external vindication ; it is its own vindication.

The real difficulty is the practical one—how is man to be brought to repentance? This is what calls for the active intervention of God in redemption. The law is there, the law of God, in both senses or both aspects. The law of right, the ideal, beautiful, commanding, unalterable, eternal. God is pledged to it. Man is called to it. The law of sin, suffering, and death, the obverse of the other, is there, inevitable as a law of nature, terrible, but equally unalterable and eternal. To it, too, God is pledged. But from this man must be saved. All love, the boundless love of God and whatever of love there may be in human spirits, will spend itself in this great enterprise. And it will be by saving men from sin rather than from the painful consequences only. This is the line then for God's intervention.

The laws are there eternal.

To save men God must intervene.

But how ? How break the love and power of sin in the hearts of men ? How dissolve the opposition of inertia or of active antagonism to God and His holy law ? All history is an answer. Behind all the working of natural law, behind all the suffering it brings, teaching, guiding, impelling men, especially behind the suffering that sin brings, checking, warning, disciplining men, is the good will of God meeting men at every turn. Through eyes that could see, minds that could interpret, He has revealed to men what they were able and willing to learn about the world and His will in it. In divers ways has He dealt with men and in divers

His progressive revelation

not unmixed

ways have they interpreted His dealings. In their ideas of God and His will they have gathered up and reproduced the best of their thought about themselves and their ideals, and with it also no little of their own weaknesses. But at any rate in the case of which we have the fullest knowledge, that is, in the history of the Hebrews, there is traceable a growing sense of God's unity as a moral personality, combining an inward ethical holiness of separateness from all sin with love and mercy towards men. God has always had His witness, in the increasingly clear revelation of His holy will and law, and His witnesses, in the humble and holy men of heart who strove to obey His law and in the valiant prophets who spoke as they were inspired of His truth.

in Hebrew
history.

In the fulness
of time

At last in the fulness of time there was a nidus prepared—not hastily nor arbitrarily. Much religious teaching and moral discipline of suffering went to prepare the ground. Among the Jews, the people of the Law, the people of the Books, there were at any rate some fit souls ready for God's new and more effectual intervention, expectant of it. It is no mere curiosity or academic speculation that makes us ask why this place and time. Would other places or times have been less fit, less conducive to the success of the great adventure? Such things do not happen by chance, we are sure. Quite apart from mere speculation we know well enough by common experience that religious and moral appeals are not at all times and to all people equally timely. But there is

no need to press the point, nor do I build any argument on it. Let it pass for whatever it may be worth. The essential thing is the fact, undisputed in the Christian world, that at a point in time the great adventure was made, and the Lord of the Vineyard sent His Son. The supreme revelation was launched. God intervened as never before.

the supreme
revelation
came.

There came into the world a great light, pure, unmixed with darkness. A new law was given, in some things strikingly new, inward, penetrating, ethical through and through. It was a law of holiness and of love, love of the holy Father and His will, love also of the brother man. But the love of man too was holy, for it was founded upon and was to be identical with the holy Father's love and purpose.

The light of
a new law.

Law of hol
love

And there was more than new light and law. These were perfectly embodied and exhibited to the world in a person, a man of real flesh and blood. The word, *i.e.* the thought, mind, and purpose of God in the world of men, became flesh and tabernacled among men, expressing, to all who would see, the true glory of God. Jesus grew up, it would appear, in body and mind as other men grew, but he grew to something that other men did not become. How in moral equipment he differed from others we do not know. But what struck his contemporaries, apparently, from first to last was his clear moral insight and his adequate moral action, his adequate response in will, word, and

embodied in
a person.

His growth
normal;

the result
unique.

Absolute moral adequacy. act to the call of the situation. His moral standard completely met every case, and in his own will, word, and act he never failed or fell below it. Tempted as other men, and with the special temptations belonging to his high mission, he saw ever the real issue and met it victoriously.

Union with God

In his relation to God he seems to have gone through to the end with a sense of complete accord with God the Father. In our records we have no sign of alienation or distance. And this is no argument from silence, proverbially precarious. Very many of the things he said could not have been said had there been any consciousness of alienation. Some have interpreted the cry from the Cross in the last passion, in the words of Psalm xxii., "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" as a proof that at the last the Father did turn away His face and allow the sufferer to feel that last agony of separation, which up to that point seems to have been unknown to him. We do not and cannot know enough to dogmatise on such a foundation. We can but bare our heads in reverent silence. Elsewhere at any rate Jesus seems to be in uninterrupted union of spirit with the Father, in fact, in just that union of holy love, of grace and loyalty, which is the ideal relationship between God and man, which it is the purpose of redemption and atonement to establish. In the case of Jesus there was just that quality and fulness of interchange which it was God's purpose to establish in the case of other men.

if broken at all only for a moment on the Cross.

Even if God's face was for a time veiled to him in that dread hour before death it was not his own sin but others' that caused it, and that terrible experience, if a fact, was part of his redemptive work and does not belong to the experience of the redeemed, as such.

An abnormal experience.

In relation to men, his impact upon them seems to have produced two contrary reactions. There was about him a moral authority which it was not easy to ignore. He seems to have presented to men, in his teaching, in his law, and in himself as embodying it, a supreme and most searching moral standard and test. In him the function of law is carried to the highest power. Where he came the thoughts of many hearts were revealed, often doubtless to men's own surprise. Light and law, even the light and law of holy love, not only illuminate and guide,—they reveal. Men write themselves down as of a certain character or quality by their action with regard to light and law, when these are set up.

In relation to men

he set up a new law which tested men.

So, when Jesus called, some, fit souls, yielded to his attraction, loved and followed him, not by any compulsion,—he appealed to their reason and conscience, he asked no unquestioning allegiance. Others, unfit souls, hated the light, preferring the darkness. His presence, his words, his very goodness, provoked them to antagonism. Not by necessity, nor by fate, nor by overpowering force of evil, but by a natural instinct of opposition to the light and law that condemned them, they

Some accepted,

some rejected

yielded themselves to the worse impulse, doubtless, in many cases, not without pricks of conscience. and killed him. At last the combined forces of prejudice, pride, and fear got him put to death. And whatever he himself may have foreseen and thought about his death, to those who had loved and followed him it seemed at the time defeat and disaster.

The
Resurrection,
its effect.

But God's intervention was not completed at the Cross. The broken hopes of the disciples were recreated by the Resurrection. God's power, they felt thereby assured, was still supreme, and the suffering Christ had behind him the vital forces of the universe. Sin had not been able to get the least hold upon him, death could not retain him. What they had hesitatingly thought about him they now knew to be true. They had seen how he bore himself towards them, towards other men and towards God. Now at least only one explanation could suffice. They looked upon him as the Son of God in an entirely unique way. He came to be to them the Redeemer from sin, the Saviour of the world. They preached to the world his redemption and his salvation. And others who believed their testimony and came by this faith into spiritual union with him had experiences as vitalising and as commanding as the first disciples had. Reconciled to God and His law, saved from the love of sin and its power over them, they were conscious of what was describable as a new creation. They were so identified with Christ that they spoke of living in him and of his living in them, and in that

Christ was
clearly proved
Son of God.

The
experience of
the believers.

Reconciliation.

union with him they knew themselves to be in union with the holy spirit of God, with God, enabled to do and to bear all things in accord with His will. Under the willing constraint of the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus they were freed from the law of sin and death,—not by the annulling of the law, but by their being saved from its operation. In a word, their entry upon the personal relationship with Jesus Christ of mutual love, showing itself in uninterrupted interchange of grace and loyalty, had effected just what we saw to be the final desire and purpose of God, for which He had created men and towards which He had been bringing them. And it came to them by way of repentance, change of mind towards God and His law, removing all barriers that hindered the interflow of holy sanctifying love and all the spiritual health and wealth implied in that. The reconciliation, the atonement, was complete, the salvation, the redemption, was effectual.

Union with God.

Power.

Freedom.

God's purpose effected

by way of repentance.

The laws of God remained—the law of the ideal, of holy love, still challenged them, but the enmity was gone, their impotence in regard to it was gone, they were fully identified with it. The terrible natural law of sin, begetting sin and misery, ending in spiritual death, remained, the mills of God work ever, but the believers were most effectually saved from them, plucked from the vicious circle, spurred by them only to more insistent efforts to bring to others the salvation they had received themselves.

Laws of God remain,

but they are saved.

CHAPTER VII.

The part of
suffering and
punishment.

So far no
difficulty in
theory,

only in the
action.

(4) This brings us to the last point we set out to discuss. It is the most difficult. What part do suffering and punishment play in atonement?

In so far as reconciliation is equivalent to atonement we have found no difficulty—in theory. We have seen man's need of reconciliation in his sin, which raises a barrier between him and God, *i.e.*, his own neglect or defiance of God and His will as the law of his ideal. What has seemed necessary, obviously necessary, and, so far as the argument has gone, the only thing necessary to the removal of the barrier, is that man repent of his sin. The change of mind was the end of the sin, the dissolution of the barrier, the ending of the alienation.

The difficulty was not in theory but the practical one,—how to turn men from sin and break its power over them, how to effect the change of mind towards God and His law, how bring about repentance. The law was there, the ideal of right, and the natural law of sin, but to save men from the law of sin and death and bring them into relation of loyalty to God and His law, this required more than law. God Himself must intervene. His holy love must so manifest itself that men

should be won. This final victory none less than God Himself could win. It was an enterprise to tax all the resources of holy love. This required God Himself

The enterprise was undertaken—could it have been otherwise and God still God, as revealed by Jesus Christ? The ground was prepared. In the fulness of time the mission was sent forth and carried through to the end. It did not fail. The testimony of the believers in ever-increasing numbers from that day till now is that he, the Christ, was all that he claimed to be. In very truth they knew him to be their Saviour from sin. What he did for them and in them made them confident that in the end he would do as much for all and carry out the whole purpose of God. And what he did for them he did by virtue of his goodness and his love, by his holy love. and God did intervene, effectually.

When his light dawned upon them they became conscious of their sin in a new way. They saw it for what it was, what it was to him and in comparison with him, and seeing it thus they hated it. Him and his law they loved, imperfectly, but yet with something of loyalty. Their mind in regard to sin and righteousness was changed. They took, or began to take, his mind in the matter, *i.e.* God's mind, and in proportion as they did so the union was complete. Repentance and faith awoke and the barriers were gone.

But now, the practical difficulty solved and the need met, this theoretical difficulty remains. Men as rational beings cannot be content with an experience, however glorious. They must try to Difficulty of theory of atonement.

explain it. They must do this for their own sake, for to be content with no explanation, or with an explanation which doesn't really convince us, in these great matters, is a great peril to intellectual and moral honesty. And they must try to explain it also for the sake of others. We saw something of the solidarity of man in human society and the obligation on him to care for his fellows and their moral development. If that is true of men generally it is much more obviously so of the Christian man who knows himself redeemed. The very nature of God revealed in Christ, His holy love and its law and its purpose for men, the very nature of man and his relationship of love and duty to his fellows, all make it his most important obligation to do what in him lies to pass on the good he has received to others. This he can only do by putting his happy experience before others in such a way as to induce them to take the same step that he had taken. He will in all probability commend this course in various ways. His own love and loyalty and the others' need will quicken all his powers to this end. But one way will be persuasion. He will give an account of his experience, commend the same course as reasonable, wise, and right for them. And in doing this he will use such arguments, account for his experience in such terms, as are common to himself and those whom he would persuade.

Men must
theorise.

because they
must
propagate
their faith.

So the common
experience

Our difficulty now arises here—in the region of theories. In the world of action God wrought a great deed, reconciling the world unto Himself.

The experience of believers in all the ages since corroborates the testimony of the first Christians in its essentials. Men have been reconciled to God, redeemed from the power of sin, changed from indifferent or rebellious subjects into loyal sons and co-workers with God,—and this quite obviously to all who know the meaning of the terms, whether they have approved or not of what they have seen. And all Christians have ascribed this change of mind and this experience of power to Jesus and what he did for them. Especially do they single out his suffering and death upon the Cross as *the* work, the atoning, redeeming, saving work of Christ. By that above all, as it has seemed to men, were the barriers removed between sinful men and God, the distance abolished, the reconciliation effected. Most will go on to say that it was by virtue of this death of Christ that it became possible for men to be forgiven by God, freed from the eternal death and suffering due to their sin, and assured of an everlasting life of blessedness after this earthly life. This practical unanimity of explanation is significant.

gets
explanation
varied but
with some
common
features.

But God has not with His supreme act in history also given one clear and authoritative word interpreting the act for all time. The act calls for man's response in act, a similar act of will. Men have made the response, of repentance and loyalty, and have been blest. But the explanations given, the theories of Atonement, have been various. Perhaps it is better so. At any rate it is the case, and it is

No one
authoritative
explanation.

Naturally so. not surprising. So momentous an act at the centre of the moral and religious history of the world we might expect to have more than one aspect, more than one meaning.

The thing is too big to be comprehended in one formula.

While the simplest may grasp it in its essential reasonableness, and recognise the holy love from which it came and its overpowering claim on the will, the acutest minds have found it tax all their powers of thought to explain.

Different aspects seized by different people.

One thinker and one age may lay hold of some one aspect of the great fact, according to the dominant conception of God and the prevailing ideas of justice. Other thinkers and other ages, with different underlying thoughts of righteousness in human society and in God, will see another aspect of the Atonement.

No one authoritative statement by Jesus,

And men have been the more free, and the more obliged, to exercise their minds about it and frame such theories as they could because Jesus himself left no clear statements or definitions on these great themes. Even the most theologically minded of his immediate disciples and apostles give us no one fixed, clear-cut doctrine of Atonement. The New Testament leaves us with some of the facts of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, and with a deep impression of great significance in them, but no precise and systematic account of that significance. We depend largely on descriptions of, or allusions to, the religious experience of a few disciples, who are much more anxious to lead men to share their experience of salvation than to define or limit their thought about it. Apart

by disciples.

They are more concerned with experience than theory.

from the selected facts of history which we know from them, such theories as they have formed have to be gathered, and have as a matter of fact been gathered and reconstructed by later thinkers, out of a few words and phrases which are of necessity metaphorical and inadequate to symbolise the whole meaning of so concrete a fact. Experience is in any one case likely to be narrower than the fact, than such facts. But the language available is likely to fall far short even of the experience of the greater souls. Words are generally apt to be either too precise or too vague, too wide or too narrow. Expressions of religious aspiration and tender emotion, if insisted on *au pied de la lettre* as terms in a philosophical definition, are liable to mislead. Poetry and feeling may be better than logic, but in theology there is no little danger of carrying over the material and method of one into the department of the other.

A few governing words and metaphors

which must not be pressed unduly.

Especially are we affected in our theological discussion by the fact that the thought forms with which the immediate disciples of Jesus, if not Jesus himself, worked were supplied mostly by Judaism and the Old Testament. Jesus and the Apostles were Jews, their minds soaked in the Old Testament thought and imagery. This imagery is drawn from their national history, and especially from the elaborate system of religious ritual and sacrifice which was so much the substance of their national law and life. However much in the case of the first disciples their Christian religious

They were especially Jewish.

Christian
experience had
to use
Jewish terms
of expression

and words of
Scripture.

experience of salvation might transcend their past Jewish experience, they had to express it in terms ready to their hand, mainly from the Old Testament.

And ever since, as soon happened, the actual words of Scripture, the New and Old Testaments, came to be invested in the Christian Church with the authority of plenary inspiration such as the Jews had ascribed to their Bible, the Old Testament, this tendency to construct theological theories upon certain phrases in the Scriptures has been rather fastened upon later generations. So we are still apt to explain Christ's Atonement by reference to Jewish sacrifices, and terms that belong properly to these, rather than to look at these sacrifices and sacrificial terms in the light of Christ's work of reconciliation. The few and precious words left us of Christ himself are perhaps not most properly and most reverently used when made the foundation of a philosophical or theological principle. Even his word in the first two Synoptists (Mt. xx. 28 and Mk. x. 45), that the Son of Man came 'to give his life a ransom for many,' *λῦτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν*, in its place that most arresting reinforcement and deepening of the great principle of lordship by service, can hardly be taken to settle the substitutionary doctrine of Atonement. The more we realise the oft-noted characteristic of Jesus' method of teaching, to throw out large principles rather than precise rules, to stimulate thought rather than to make it unnecessary, the less shall we be satisfied to build theories on words, or on details of his inimitable parables, apart from

Christ's own
words.

His method of
teaching.

general principles observable in human experience and the deep moral intuitions which guide men's action at their best. After all, this experience is man's great school, God's great school for man. To its teaching Jesus constantly appeals. If we can look at it fairly it must have guidance for us on this central fact and doctrine of the Christian faith.

So go back to experience.

I am emboldened therefore to pursue my task to the end fearlessly. Others must judge whether my reading of common experience is just, and then how far we may rightly follow the lines it suggests in interpreting the action of God in this mystery of the sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And, may I say again, my enquiry is not about the facts of the life, sufferings, and death, nor about the fact of reconciliation, atonement, forgiveness of sins, nor about the Christian's experience of reconciliation and salvation.

Facts unquestioned, of history, of experience.

These are to me real and true beyond all question. And happily their reality and truth are not affected by the theories by which men have tried to explain them. The theories are indeed rather concerned with God's action and God's thought just where they are outside, and necessarily outside, human experience. Here we might well be content to wonder and adore, but that men cannot and dare not give up the attempt to understand. Not only, as has been said already, is the mind driven to seek explanation, for the persuasion of others

Theories lie largely outside experience

but affect our
ideals of
righteousness.

as well as the satisfaction of its own right demand, but these theories do affect most vitally our conceptions of God, and these lie at the root of our conceptions of right and duty and justice among men. There need, then, be no apology for attempts to get clear light from any quarter on these themes. Rather 'woe is unto me' if I withhold any light I think is given to me.

Method
proposed for
rest of essay.

I purpose therefore to conclude these short studies without any attempt to examine the various theories of Atonement that have been advanced from time to time. This has been done quite lately, and so adequately, by Professor H. R. Mackintosh, by Mr. J. K. Mozley, and Principal R. S. Franks, to say nothing of older historians of the doctrine, that it is unnecessary for me to say anything here about the history. But I propose to deal briefly with two elements or assumptions with which this Essay is most directly concerned, which are common to most of the theories, and then to sum up the results of the application of the principles here reached in a more positive statement of what seem to me the essential elements of the facts which the doctrine sets out to explain.

CHAPTER VIII

THE two elements referred to, which seem to persist amid changes of thought or of emphasis and enter more or less into most theories of the Atonement, and are directly affected by the foregoing arguments about suffering and punishment, are as follows :

Two constant elements in Atonement theories.

(a) Christ's *sufferings*, culminating in his *death* on the Cross, are often thought of as *God's punishment* inflicted on him, or borne by him, for man's sin.

Christ's sufferings penal.

(b) God's forgiveness of man's sin is often thought of as only possible when the full punishment for the sin is borne by or for the sinner, or, in other words, God's justice is thought to require *full punishment* for sin as a *condition of forgiveness*.

Forgiveness conditional upon full penalty being paid.

It is evident that these two principles, pre-suppositions, or assumptions, not only belong intimately to the set of ideas about the nature and functions of suffering and punishment which this Essay set out to investigate, but they are closely connected together. In treating them specifically, therefore, apart from the general discussion of punishment and atonement which we have so far followed, and especially in treating them separately, there is likely to be some overlapping and repetition.

These belong closely to the subject

and to one another,

but their
importance
calls for
separate
treatment.

But they are so fundamental to the most important theories of the Atonement, and so much ingenuity of thought and true feeling about man's sin and God's love have been expended on the difficulties inherent in them, that they do seem to call for explicit treatment. And as the emphasis of the first is on the penal element in Christ's suffering and death, and in the second the emphasis is on the necessity of this penal element as a condition of God's forgiveness, they are sufficiently different and separable to call for separate treatment, at the risk of some tedious reiteration of argument.

Are Christ's
sufferings
penal?

Functions of
suffering

(a) First, then, as to the penal element so often assumed in Christ's sufferings. We have, in Parts I. and II., noticed a clear distinction between suffering and punishment. Suffering is the wider term of the two. All punishment, by its nature and definition, involves suffering, but by no means is all suffering punishment. Suffering is proportioned not to guilt but to sensitiveness, physical, mental, and moral. It often arises from sin and *may* be used as punishment, but it may arise from quite other causes and fulfil quite other functions than that of punishment. It is part of the order of nature which seems to have existed before man and his sin entered into the world, and exists still, independently of man's sin. Suffering and death would seem, therefore, to be part of the universal human experience, affecting not least the sinless and the comparatively sinless. And this order of nature with its suffering and death seems on the

whole a good order, within which and by the help of which man has been enabled to reach whatever he has enjoyed of scientific knowledge, of moral insight and power, of happiness and communion of love with God and his fellows.

In so far as this is true it is surely open to us to think of the sufferings and death of Christ, entirely real and tremendously significant though they are, as something quite other than God's punishment for sin.

allow other than penal view of Christ's sufferings.

Again, we saw that man uses suffering for his moral ends, and this we call punishment. It commonly has something arbitrary and artificial about it, however much he tries to make it fit the crime. God also, we saw, seems to use suffering for His ends, but not as man does. Not only is man's attachment of suffering to sin more or less arbitrary and artificial in itself, but he makes many mistakes in carrying out his purpose. In his ignorance of the real sinfulness of an act he is apt to make his punishments too light or too heavy ; from the inadequacy of his sense of justice or from lack of administrative ability he may let the punishment fall on the wrong persons ; from partiality and arbitrary kindness he may remit punishment, wisely or unwisely, with good effect or ill.

The nature of God's reaction upon sin

not like man's punishments.

Not so in God's world of orderly sequence of cause and effect. In the natural order of things suffering follows sin, but it follows also other causes as well as sin, and the suffering which follows sin falls on others as well as on the sinner. But,

The consequences of sin in God's order are inevitable.

once get rid of the assumption that all suffering is or ought to be the consequence or the punishment of sin, there is nothing arbitrary or artificial about this orderly sequence of cause and effect in God's world. There is certainly nothing arbitrary or artificial about the consequences of sin. They flow out of it naturally and necessarily, as the essential working out of its nature. They are inevitable, unalterable, inseparable from the cause. The only way in which they can be prevented or done away with is by the action of some force which prevents or does away with the cause. In a moral world it could not be otherwise. If causes could not be relied on to produce their proper effects, whether pleasant or painful, for good or for ill; if chance or caprice and not a moral will were the ultimate arbiter; if favouritism or magic could rid men of the consequences of their actions, what security would there be in either science or morality?

Science and
morality
require this.

From the
nature of
personality
they are also
untransferable.

And not only are these consequences of sin inevitable in God's good order of the world, but such is the nature of personality that they are also undetachable and untransferable. This perhaps is not immediately obvious. One man may owe to another a debt, be it of a hundred pence or of ten thousand talents, and it would seem to matter little to the creditor whether the debtor paid the debt himself or, if he were unwilling or unable, some friend paid it for him. And much use has been made of such metaphors and analogies in recom-

mending the atoning work of Christ. Let us say at once that so far as the analogy goes it is just, illuminating, and helpful. By the aid of such an analogy many a soul has come into a relationship of saving faith and grateful loyalty to Christ. But the analogy does not go the whole way, it is not complete and at all points satisfying for all minds.

There are two main classes or kinds into which we may divide the consequences of sin. There are the more *external* consequences, the pains and sufferings, physical and mental, individual and social, which flow from the sinful act, *e.g.* bodily disease, poverty, the loss of the confidence and respect of one's fellows. And these pains and losses may extend to others beside the guilty. Now it is clear that some of these consequences may by what is called good luck or good management or by the kindness of friends be to a large extent counteracted. The disease if it comes may be cured, the poverty relieved, the confidence of society regained. But the fact of the sin and its natural consequences in the order of things can never be undone, things can never be as they were before the sin or as they would have been without it. God Himself cannot undo the past. No atonement can make it as if it had never been.

Two classes of consequences of sin.

(1) The more external.

These are not beyond remedy,

but even these are in essence inevitable and untransferable.

“ The Moving Finger writes ; and, having writ,
 Moves on : nor all thy Piety nor Wit
 Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,
 Nor all thy Tears wash out a Word of it.”

There is terrible truth in the old Persian poet's

grim gibe, and if the Christian faith had no other minor premise to add than his, there would be little room for the Christian hope of redemption.

It is true that some of these consequences of a man's sin often have to be borne by others also, against their will, or they can be shared and borne by others willingly, out of love, but this extension of the effects, whether willingly or unwillingly accepted, cannot alter the facts, however much it may alter the mind of the sinner and his future attitude towards the sin and the broken law of the ideal and towards the persons who with him are affected by his act. Man must still bear the consequences of his sin though others bear them too. If the fathers eat sour grapes the children's teeth, and many others' too, may be set on edge, but that does not save the fathers' teeth from the twinge.

(2) The more
internal
spiritual
consequences
of sin

This becomes increasingly clear and significant when the other kind of consequences of sin is considered, the more *internal* and spiritual effects. The most hopeful and obviously salutary effects of sin are, we saw, the suffering it brings. Even when it falls on the innocent it tends to turn the sinner, and others, to righteousness. This is the very *raison d'être* of pain used as punishment. But the worst of all the consequences of sin, the most terrible entail and punishment of sin, is its natural effect in the shape of more sin, the extension and deepening of the hold of sin on the sinner, and the spread of it and the propagation

may spread
and propagate
sin and death.

of it in other lives, the blinding of moral vision, the hardening of the heart, the increasing alienation from God and goodness. This is the natural law of sin and death, spiritual death, which is far more terrible than any of the more external consequences.

And this the most terrible of all the consequences of sin, this most fatal of all diseases of the spirit, is quite clearly in the nature of things undetachable and untransferable. The sinner may infect those nearest and dearest to him, may spread the disease through the whole society of which he is a part and scatter the germs of the mischief through after ages, but that brings no mitigation or relief to his own heart and life. In this sense none can bear, or take away, or take upon himself, another's sin. None can even take away or take upon himself, in the sense of bearing *instead of* the sinner, the essential consequences and worst punishment of sin. So far as this is true surely we not only *may*, but we *must*, think of the sinless Christ's sufferings and death in some other light than as punishment for men's sin.

But that is not transference of sin or of its consequences.

This necessitates other than penal view of Christ's sufferings.

Yet without doubt in human experience pain, even death, and the greatest of human sufferings, do come to be borne, willingly or unwillingly, by the guiltless, even when these are the direct consequence of others' sins. And though suffering and death in themselves have not necessarily moral meaning or value,—that depends on the spirit in which they are met and borne,—and though the innocent cannot, however willing they may be,

But innocence and love may bear the consequence with and for the sake of the sinner.

and so tend
to redeem the
sinner from
the love and
power of sin.

This holy
suffering love
the greatest
moral power
in men

take on themselves the most intimate and essential consequences of the sin, any more than they can take on themselves the sin itself, *instead of* the sinner, yet the guiltless can and do in a true sense bear the burden of the sin and its consequences *with* the sinner and *for*, on behalf of, the sinner. And such is the nature of love, especially of holy love, the love that is set not only on the human object of affection but on God and goodness, on the law of the ideal as God's holy will, that when it willingly bears the suffering of the sin for love's sake, for the sake of the person and for the sake of the law of goodness, *i.e.* for holy love's sake, it has the greatest moral worth, and, when understood, has the power that nothing else has to move, to purify, to redeem the hearts of men from the love and the power of sin. How often has a good father's or mother's love, enduring in spite of the sin, and bearing patiently the pain and shame that have come with the sin, reconciled and won back to loyalty the prodigal who had thrown off restraint, whose sin, whose own sufferings and shame, had but hardened him. What more potent influence in the world than the sight of such suffering love to stir the heart, not only of the sinner involved but of all who by sympathy and understanding realise it, to repentance of sin and to similar love and goodness? It is felt, and rightly felt, by the unperverted human heart and conscience to be the highest activity of the spirit of love and goodness, the highest embodiment of the law of the human ideal. And every exhibition

of this spirit does in its degree tend to turn the human heart to righteousness, to save men from the evil of the world and its hold upon their own hearts, and to establish most effectually in human society the law of the ideal which is the will of God. And the principle of this active saving power in the hearts of men is love, love of the human object in spite of his sin, and at the same time love of goodness, the law of the ideal, the love of God and His holy will for man, in one word holy love.

And if this principle has been seen at work in the best examples of human love dealing with the sin of the beloved, may it not well be so with the supreme example of God's holy love in Christ as he met man's sin ? and the greatest moral activity of God

If partial and limited examples of such patient holy love in men and women have tended strongly to win the hearts of their fellows to love and goodness, what wonder that so many, when they have seen Christ, not perforce but willingly, for holy love's sake, putting himself in the way of men's sin, without ever yielding to its temptations, bearing patiently all the pains of human life, even to the violent death upon the Cross, bearing also all the sufferings that could come to the spirit of holy love as consequences of men's sin,—what wonder that many have been thereby redeemed from the power and slavery of sin ? The wonder is that so many should be familiar with the story and be still unmoved, unredeemed. It is no wonder that to those who have come at all to realise and the source of all moral victory since.

its meaning this atoning, redeeming, life and death of Christ has seemed the greatest of all moral acts, central to the moral world, the source and inspiration and support of men's greatest moral victories through the ages since. By the eternal moral value and energy of it, as they have come to understand and enter into it, men have been cleansed, redeemed, and saved from sin, have come to open their hearts to something of that same spirit of holy love, and manifested it in their own lives.

But this is
not
punishment,

either man's

or God's.

Here, then, we have men's sin and its consequences, and God's holy love suffering the consequences and saving, redeeming men from it. But this suffering—does it not seem to be on a different plane, belonging to a different set of ideas, from that to which punishment belongs? Sin has its consequences, to the sinner and to others, consequences painful and ruinous. The painful consequences to the sinner may, if we so please, be called punishment, man's punishment or God's. But it is only man's punishment, useful but external, material, and separable, more or less uncertain and arbitrary, that another can bear instead of the sinner. As man's judgment becomes more sure, more understanding, and more just, *i.e.* as it approaches more nearly to the divine standard, his reaction on sin will be more personal, more spiritual and redemptive in its ends, more inevitable and more justly proportioned to the sin. And God's punishment, if that is the right term, punishment which

has all these qualities in perfection, *ex hypothesi*, none can bear instead of the sinner, it is indissolubly bound up with the sin, untransferable as the sin. When redemption and salvation comes to the sinner it is not so much because some other person though himself sinless has taken on himself the sin—is not this a contradiction in terms?—or even the punishment that was due to the sinner—is not this contrary to experience? Rather is it because another person, filled with the spirit of holy love and absolutely antagonistic to sin, who has proved himself through all temptation and all suffering stronger than sin, victorious over it at its worst, has come and set himself beside the sinner and borne willingly with him the burden of his weakness and of his sin; and there, by his unconquerable love and goodness, which not all the moral weakness, meanness, and wickedness of men, nor all the suffering it could cause to holy love, were able to quell, he has won a way for himself and his holy law into the sinful heart, touched it to repentance, to gratitude, and to hunger and thirst after righteousness, brought to it something of love and good will, something of victory over the evil in itself and in the world. And just so far as the new strong spirit of this other person has entrance and control yielded to it, so far the sinner's sin is ended and the consequences that flow from it. Not that the past sin and its consequences are undone. They are past history, facts unalterable, and their effects tend to go on in the lives affected by them,—grace is humbling,

It is the power
of holy love

winning its
way into the
sinner's heart,

ending its sin,
not undoing
the past

but breaking
its entail.

gives no room for complacency or pride. But the worst consequence in the life of the repentant sinner himself, the entail of more sin, is broken. There, in place of the old sinful spirit and centre of infection, is a new centre of activity of the spirit of health, of holy love, to carry on and spread further the conquest of sin in the hearts of men. And this in the teeth of all opposition and temptation, in spite of and even through suffering.

Punishment
belongs to
another plane.

But to think of this suffering on the part of holy love, either in the case of Christ himself or in those who rejoice to partake in his sufferings for the same high ends,—to think of this as essentially punishment is to bring the mind to a different level, to a world of poor imperfect human attempts at justice, with its apparatus of codes and courts and fines, where, just because man with his law and its sanctions cannot get at the heart of the offender, even if he tries, he must perforce use such means as he has, however external and inadequate, to keep society from disintegration. These sanctions are good enough in their place, they have played a useful part in the development of man's sense of justice, and still have their function to perform in human society as it is and with human nature as it is, but they do not give us the setting in which to get the truest understanding of the supreme act of God in the moral world, His royal Atonement by which He reconciles the world unto Himself.

CHAPTER IX

(b) If this is a true impression from the facts of experience, experience of human love at its best, and the light it sheds on the way in which the holy love of God in Christ does reconcile men to God and redeem them from their sins, it will affect our view not only of the first of the two elements which have played so large a part in theories of Atonement, *i.e.* the penal aspect of Christ's sufferings, but it will affect also our view of the second, *i.e.* the idea of God's forgiveness being conditioned by full payment of the penalties of sin. Here also the suggestion brings the mind to a level on which God's forgiveness seems strangely out of keeping with its surroundings. It savours not so much of God's holy love, free, gracious, self-giving, to win love and holiness in response, as of the rough and ready retaliatory justice of primitive man with its fines, so much for the taking of a life, so much for each limb, or of the less humane rule of 'life for a life' and 'eye for an eye,' or even of the later reactionary penalty of hanging a man for sheep stealing and a hundred other minor offences.

The law of retaliation, of equivalent suffering, we saw to be a fair beginning for human justice,

God's
forgiveness
as conditioned
by full bearing
of punishment

belongs to
lower human
plane.

Retaliation
valuable.

affording a fair standard for human punishments. It has had, and still has, immense moral value in human dealings. So much of justice at any rate the most immature in morals can grasp, and so much the most highly developed must be prepared to acknowledge and abide by to the end. There is no small peril to elementary law and justice in tampering with it. Certainly in all relationships the offender who refuses to make restitution, reparation, for wrong done, when it is within his power to make it, has not yet come near the standard of human justice, still less has he come near the essential principle of divine forgiveness. To resent the suffering of the known and acknowledged consequences of his wrongdoing, whether the suffering be by the ordinance of man as punishment or by the ordinance of God in the natural order of things, is hardly compatible with true repentance. And, as we saw, effectual forgiveness, in the sense of reconciliation and removal of barriers, can only come with repentance, is the obverse of repentance.

Refusal of
reparation
inconsistent
with
repentance

and therefore
with
forgiveness.

Weakness of
retaliation.

It is
ineffective of
law's real end

and except in
externals
incapable of
application.

But the law of equivalent suffering, we saw, has its limits. Not only has it the weakness of all law, *i.e.* that it can only enforce outward conduct, even if it can do that—while the good will which is the ultimate moral end of law is out of its reach. But there is this further weakness with which we are now concerned, *i.e.* that in most cases, at any rate in the most important cases, it cannot in the nature of things be applied.

A simple case of wrong done, such as damage to

property, may generally be settled by equivalent payment. Law courts and codes in all societies have drawn up lists of fines and penalties roughly corresponding to various injuries. But the more intimate and personal the relationship of the wronged and the wrongdoer, *i.e.*, the less external the wrong, and the more it partakes of that opposition of will in regard to an ideal which we called sin, the sort of wrong which enters into the relationship between man and God, the less is there any possibility of reaching the equivalent suffering, and the less satisfaction would there be in it if it were reached. Where reparation is possible, justice, Reparation satisfies, however primitive or however highly developed, obviously requires reparation. Wronged and wrongdoer alike find satisfaction in it. But many but apart from that wrongs are beyond reparation. It is true that even then there may be something of satisfaction to the injured person in seeing the offender suffer something like equal injury. It is perhaps good for the community. There may even be some satisfaction to the wrongdoer in the suffering. In some obscure way he may feel that he has paid for his wrongdoing—that his account with the whole order of things, if not with the injured person, is roughly squared or evened, his debt is cancelled.

But this kind of confused instinctive feeling suffering doesn't satisfy men at their best which finds satisfaction in equivalent suffering, useful as it may be, is not characteristic of man at his best. It is certainly no fit image of God's nor God. justice. The better the character of the injured The good man desires amendment (not suffering) person the less will be his desire that the wrongdoer,

and the moral
law upheld.

In comparison
suffering is of
no moment.

or any one else for him, should suffer equal pain or loss. And this will not be out of mere sentiment or sympathetic sensitiveness which shrinks from pain, but from a true estimate of values. What he will be intensely concerned for is the amendment of the wrongdoer, and, what is involved in this, the maintenance of the moral law of the ideal. If the moral law cannot be maintained, and the wrongdoer turned from his wrong, except by suffering, the good man will rather see him suffer than that he should go on in his wrong. But his satisfaction will be not in the suffering but in the amendment. To him reparation, if possible at all, is not a thing to be exacted as a condition of forgiveness but welcomed as a sign of repentance. Where reparation is impossible he will none the less welcome the repentance. And if the suffering is separable from the offence in the natural order of things, and true repentance and amendment can be effected by other means, even if it be at cost to himself, he will, in proportion to the genuine goodness of his own will, rejoice in the ill will changed to good, in the end of the alienation, and will let nothing on his part interfere with free forgiveness and the union or reunion of love and good will. In comparison with the moral end achieved, *i.e.* the saving of the wrongdoer from his wrongfulness of will, from his sin, and the maintenance of the ideal in the mind and heart of all concerned, the suffering involved, to the one or to the other, is counted as nothing. In proportion as the repentance is real and complete it will be irrelevant

for the injured to demand the suffering and for the wrongdoer to undergo it. It would have no value except as a proof of the reality of the repentance and good will and by way of maintaining and vindicating the moral law. Happily, in proportion to the goodness of the wronged and the true repentance of the wrongdoer, these ends, the proof of repentance and the vindication of the moral law, may be met in other ways. That will, it is hoped, be clear before the end of this Essay.

In the meantime we have come by a different route to the point reached in discussing the functions of suffering in Part I. The further men get in moral development the more independent do they become of suffering, so far as their desires and claims of right are concerned. They get to bear it more readily, for worthy ends. They resent it less, whether it come from God's natural order or from man. As painful they avoid it, naturally and rightly; in itself it has no virtue or value; and, still more rightly, they seek to save others from it, so far as love prompts and right permits. But, when reason and good will have done their best in combating it, the strong and wise among men have shown their strength and wisdom in taking it as it comes, with the least possible disturbance of spirit. With truer appreciation of values they go their way and pursue the really absorbing ends of life, which are most important for themselves and for others, ends domestic, scientific, aesthetic, political, moral, and religious, undeterred by undue

To the good
man suffering
is morally
ἀδύνατον.

Not from
insensibility.

considerations of suffering. And they do this not simply from stoic insensibility or contemptuousness, but, if they are Christians with anything of Jesus' faith in God's government of the world, in patience and trust, making it serve the high purposes of love which they believe to be behind the natural order of the world and behind human action. And the more ready a man is to suffer without resentment for good ends, the less will he desire that others should suffer, even those who have wronged him, except it be for the good and sufficient ends of love and right, for their own good and for the law of the ideal and its firm establishment in the minds and hearts of men.

It is the
material of
moral life, but
in itself
non-moral,

In fact, to the disciplined mind and will, suffering comes to be what the Stoics called *ἀδιάφορον*, morally a matter of indifference, in itself neither good nor evil. It is one of the factors, an important factor, of experience, part of the material of which the moral life is made, with which morality is much concerned. But its effects for good or for evil will depend on the way the spirit meets it. It may be transmuted, so to speak, into gold to enrich, into lead to crush, or into poison to embitter the spirit. And this is true of one's own suffering and the suffering of others. The pain men suffer and the pain they see others suffer they may resent as unjust and become rebellious, or they may look on it with indifference and become hard and brutalised. But they may bear it patiently, so far as it is their own, and see it in others only to react upon it with sympathy and the energy of

and takes
shape from the
spirit which
meets it

for ill,

for good.

love. Then there issues gold as it were refined by fire. This is the true wealth of the world. But the virtue is not in the fire, it is in the tried gold ; not in the suffering, but in the spirit's energy that it stirs to understanding, to bearing, to overcoming ; especially in the energy of holy love which it calls out to combat not only the suffering but the sin of the world.

CHAPTER X

Sin and suffering are incommensurable

in our human experience.

THERE has emerged then from our discussion of suffering in common experience, from our consideration of punishment and its limitations, and from what we see to be the good man's attitude towards suffering, his own and others', an increasingly obvious incommensurability in human experience between a man's suffering and his sin. Sin results in suffering, but many other things cause suffering too. And even the suffering caused by sin falls on men not in proportion to their sin but rather according to their sensitiveness. Love and goodness increase men's capacity for suffering and their willingness to bear it. But to call the loving soul's sufferings punishment, even when they are an effect of some one's sin, is misleading or irrelevant. Sin cannot be measured in terms of suffering, nor can goodness be measured by the absence of suffering. So far as our experience goes, this is the one thing about sin and suffering that stands out clear and indisputable.

Are they equally incommensurable in view of immortality?

But before we leave this question of the part that suffering has in atonement, even before we can leave the question as to how far the sufferings and death of Christ can be considered as payment

of the penalty due to man's sin, we must be prepared, with such help as experience may give us, to look beyond experience, beyond the limits of this life. Experience, if we have read it aright, does show the closest connection between sin and suffering, and closest connection also between atonement and suffering. Sin always causes suffering. That is part of the natural order, the providential order of the world, most would admit. If that were all, there would be no puzzling problem of suffering. That fits well man's instinctive sense of justice. That's the plan on which he regulates the educational and disciplinary arrangements of human society.

If pain only followed sin men would be more satisfied,

Doubtless he is sometimes inclined to resent all suffering. At any rate he would be glad to be without it. Pain is always painful, and death he looks on as an evil, though a necessary evil. But still he is aware these have their uses. At any rate he cannot escape them. He uses them himself on occasion. If only suffering were always proportioned to sin, as he himself tries to proportion it when he uses it, his moral sense would be satisfied. It is when the sinner is comfortable, and when the innocent suffer that the moral difficulty in suffering vexes and hurts him. But so in actual experience he sees things often happen. And then he is apt to ask the world-old question—Is not God proved hereby lacking either in love for the creatures He has made or in power to carry out the dictates of His love? And however much man may hesitate to draw the

but innocent suffering disturbs.

apparently obvious conclusion in the case of God as responsible for the natural order of things, if a human parent or ruler managed things so he would assuredly put him down as incompetent if not unjust.

Man tends to
believe in
immortality

But in his hopes and fears, his loves and his ideals, man does not stop at actual experience. He has apparently everywhere tended to a belief in immortality. And conceptions of Heaven and Hell, as places or states of bliss and of suffering respectively, of reward and of punishment after this life for right and wrong doing in this life, have in various shapes grown up to give content, shape, and colour to the belief in immortality of the soul. The belief in immortality and in reward and punishment after this life is by no means exclusively or distinctively Christian or even Jewish. It plays a considerable part in Jewish thought and religious controversy in New Testament times, but not in the books of the Old Testament. And perhaps even now our popular conceptions of the after-life, of Heaven and Hell, owe not a little of their shape and colour to Greek and Roman ideas of the state of the dead, ideas with which scholar poets like Dante and Milton have bodied out the metaphors and suggestions of the New Testament. Jesus' own words on the subject, while full of most complete assurance as to the love and wisdom and power of God and the reality of the unseen world and life after death, give little satisfaction to the natural curiosity of the mind about the actual conditions of such after-life.

almost
universally,
not only in
Christian
thought.

We are concerned with these conceptions here only so far as men have used them to vindicate the ideal of divine justice and make it more compatible with the apparently inequitable distribution of suffering in this present life.

Now, while it is true that the belief in a state of suffering hereafter for the wicked and of bliss for the good, according to the character of their deeds in their lifetime, is not without perplexities and moral difficulties of its own, according to the shape the belief has taken, it is true also to observation that men have found in these conceptions a great source of stimulus and restraint, of hope and of fear, which have been of immense practical force in the moral life. And, what concerns us more here, by means of this belief men have been able, in the matter of suffering, to reach more or less satisfaction of the moral sense and strengthen their faith in the divine justice. In their thought and imagination they have made the next world redress some of the inequalities and apparent injustices inherent in the incidence of suffering in this.

Belief in
immortality
a moral force,

and helps to
restore sense
of justice and
balance of
suffering.

At anyrate in the matter of reward there is to the average mind some solid moral satisfaction in the assurance that virtue will have its reward some day if not now, that however the innocent may suffer here there is an unalloyed bliss to be enjoyed hereafter. And in the matter of punishment on the other side, in the case of Christian thought, even the terrible prospect of future suffering

It lessens the
sense of
injustice in
innocent
suffering.

The suffering
of the wicked
is not the
real trouble.

suggested by passages in the New Testament has not been unrelieved. Not only has there been much widely diffused, if dim and vague, hope and confidence in the mercifulness of God's justice, "who willeth not the death of a sinner," whatever certain passages in the Bible may say, but in face of the worst fears the sinner has often enough felt no injustice in the contemplation of his fate. Conscious that he has had his chance of the better part, he could but admit that having chosen the worse and rejected the salvation that sought him, he has made his own bed and must be prepared to lie in it. However dimly it be conceived, he has had some confidence in the justice of God's judgment.

The idea of
eternal
punishment
tends to
disappear

for various
reasons.

Perhaps it may be said that in these latter days the Biblical conception of Hell as a place or state of eternal punishment of the wicked has been so weakened that it has ceased to weigh at all seriously in men's general ideas about the final destiny of man as affected by sin. And there is probably some truth in this. Several causes have contributed to this weakening, *e.g.*, different ideas about the inspiration of the Bible ; a more diffused humanitarian sentiment, which is not so much alarmed as revolted by pictures of endless and hopeless physical pain ; a finer sense of human justice and the purpose of punishment, leading inevitably to a changed conception of divine discipline, both human and divine discipline alike becoming less mechanical, retaliatory, and vindictive, more discriminating, personal, and redemptive.

But these changes in the shape and colour of the conception of whatever punishment awaits the sinner after this life do not really affect our argument. Men's conception of justice in punishment, as we saw in the first chapter on Punishment, is generally speaking the suffering by the wrong-doer of loss or pain in some way equivalent or at any rate proportional to the damage or wrong done. But men's confidence in a human administration of justice depends not so much on the actual method of punishment, or on the severity or the mildness of the legal penalties, as on the personal qualities of the administrator. Granted the general acceptance of the law as right and its ideal good for the persons subject to it, men seem able to accustom themselves readily to very different methods of punishment and very different degrees of severity in punishment. In home, school, and State alike, there have been at different times and with different types of culture very different methods of discipline and very different degrees of severity, but the severe discipline is not necessarily more effectual than the mild, nor is the mild more sure as such to win good will and confidence than the severe. What counts most is the ruler's sureness of knowledge and discrimination in judgment, his fairness and impartiality towards all offenders without fear or favour, and his own personal integrity in relation to the law.

The change does not affect the main argument.

Effectiveness of human punishment due not to severity

but to confidence in the law and the administrator.

We should expect to find the same principles exemplified in men's thought about God's judgment.

So with divine punishment.

Transference
of ideas from
human to
divine sphere.

ment of man's sin and His disciplinary dealing with it, and therefore in their conception of His Atonement and their satisfaction in it. For men naturally carry over into their thought of the unseen world beyond experience ideas of justice and righteousness similar to those which have served them for the affairs of this life, with whatever qualification or addition is suggested by their conception of the greatness of God and by the vague thought of endless duration, so difficult to realise in imagination, which belongs to the word eternal. This is, indeed, how important changes in men's moral and religious conceptions come about. In religion men are apt to be conservative, their ideas of God being accepted without serious criticism mainly on the authority of mythological tradition or of sacred books. But as history brings new experience and the growth of knowledge leads to reflection on that experience men tend to criticise and revise their traditional habits and beliefs. And when once free interaction of ideas is established between the different departments of men's life and thought, and experience is applied to modify theory and theory is used to guide experience, then every important change in moral custom or thought about custom is apt to modify men's ideas about God, and in turn new conceptions of God and His attitude towards men tend to modify the ideas that govern men in their own social arrangements and conduct.

It is something of this kind that has happened

in the case of men's thought about the punishment of the sinner after death.

There is no need to argue here for or against the belief in eternal punishment. We are only concerned to see whether the weakening of this belief weakens also the belief in God's eternal and essential antagonism to sin and the effect that the realisation of this antagonism tends to produce in the minds of men, that is to say, we are concerned to see whether man in his conscience, in his conflict with sin and his satisfaction with the divine justice, is weakened by losing belief in the eternal punishment of the sinner.

Effects of loss of belief in eternal punishment.

Religious teachers and moralists who have in all sincerity and on the authority of Scripture held the belief, and found it in some cases an effectual means for putting the fear of God into men's hearts and so turning them from the evil of their ways, may regret that the force of the appeal has been weakened. But happily there are other grounds of appeal, other deterrents from evil courses, no less effectual in producing the desired results. Just as at one time in our own country the death penalty was attached to more than two hundred offences in our civil code without preventing the offences, and the removal of the extreme punishment from nearly all offences does not seem to have resulted in any general increase in crime or decrease of respect for the law, similarly it would appear that the fear of God and regard for His law, which is the end of all

Loss of whip of terror.

Compensations for loss.

Analogy of death penalty in civil code.

punishment, has not depended upon the eternal duration of the punishment conceived of as falling upon the sinner. Though, therefore, some have felt no offence in the doctrine, while others have felt the offence so keenly that they have felt themselves morally bound to reject the authorities of the Christian faith which seemed bound up with it, and though many devout souls have expended an almost superhuman ingenuity of logic in trying to satisfy their minds and consciences that eternal punishment was not inconsistent with the conception of God's holy love, the force of our main argument does not seem to be affected by the doctrine, nor is it affected by any weakening or loss of the belief in the doctrine.

Real value of
idea of
immortality
independent
of eternal
punishment.

There is value, very great value, in the idea of immortality as affecting our conception of God's justice in relation to human suffering and in His dealing with human sin. But the value does not depend on our view of eternal punishment. If for what seems to us good reason we hold to the doctrine, our satisfaction is not in the everlastingness of the punishment that falls upon the sinner. Such an attitude is unthinkable. Surely it is rather in the conviction that in spite of what seem to be the inequalities and injustices in the incidence of suffering in this life, eventually God's good and just will must prevail. Those who set themselves against God and His law get what we are sure must be their deserts, and, though we cannot and dare not even in imagination realise the

suffering involved, persistent wrong is finally and eternally defeated ; while those who unite their wills to the will of God, however much they may suffer here, are assured of that eternal happiness which they have never deserved but which God in His mercy and love wills for man. If on the other hand for what seems good reason we feel we cannot believe in eternal punishment, our satisfaction in the rejection is not due to a merely sentimental aversion to suffering. It is surely the conviction that, with something more of discrimination and proportion, justice still gets done, and that in spite of seeming injustices, the prosperity of the wicked and the suffering of the innocent here, God's good will of righteousness and of the highest good for man must and will in the end prevail. In short, whatever may be the value of punishment, human and divine alike, whatever the satisfaction it may bring to the ethical mind, the value and the satisfaction would seem to lie not in the duration of the punishment, least of all in any eternity in its duration, but in its use as effecting the ends of a good and righteous will, ultimately in its subservience to the purposes of the will, the holy love, of God.

But it does
serve the ends
of justice

And there we must needs leave it. For whatever views we may have of God's dealing with sin after this life and of the way in which Christ's sufferings affect this, the real satisfaction which the idea of immortality brings to the mind troubled by the irregular incidence of suffering in this life certainly does not lie in any actual knowledge or experience

though we
cannot
measure
exactly how.

of exact and equal retribution of suffering meted out in the future life for deeds done in the body. If any such quantitative equivalence cannot be seen in this life, still less is it demonstrable hereafter. If experience of suffering in this life is perplexing, suffering in the next world is to us here entirely shrouded in darkness.

Immortality
gives time for
love and
justice to work
out their ends.

But immortality does ease the burden of the troubled mind. It does remove what seem to be the arbitrary, accidental limits and conditions of this life, and widens out the boundaries of the time within which the divine justice may work itself out, the divine love achieve its ends. And here, when all is said and done, is the bed-rock upon which, and upon which alone, man's sense of ultimate justice can build with satisfaction. It is the divine justice, ultimately one and identical with the divine love, which we believe to be somehow and somewhere always at work. Our authorities, scriptural or other, may seem sometimes too exact and definite, sometimes too vague and uncertain, in their suggestions as to the limits and the methods of its operation. But our faith is that it works. The human mind may lose itself in the attempt to imagine unending duration either of suffering or of bliss, and in the attempt to prove the justice of such retribution or reward. But there is, we are sure, an eternal mind that is not lost, an intelligence and a love that is absolutely just and good, and this has the final, ultimate, and ruling word. However little we may see, and

however much we may think we know, we have to come back finally to the assurance of faith and say, "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" Here if anywhere is our satisfaction and our hope. We cannot measure these things. We cannot equate sin and suffering, our own or others', least of all the sufferings of Christ and man's sin. When we have tried to persuade ourselves that we can, that the exact measures are given us, the satisfaction of the enquiring mind does not last long. Actual human sin and love and suffering soon break up the satisfaction of the most authoritative and the most logical theories, and we have to fall back on our ignorance and God's righteousness, His love and His power seen in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But there men do find a satisfaction which is not only solid but enthusiastic, not only a denial of their doubts and fears and an assurance that God's judgments are not arbitrary or unjust, but a positive assurance that the requirements of justice, whatever they may be, are met, that the right is done and will be done, the right, the perfect right, the adequate action of holy love for the effecting of its high purposes. If punishment, my own punishment and the punishment of those I love best, is part of this, well and good. The suffering involved will be such as holy love wills, and such as holy love itself also bears, for the purposes of holy love, and is therefore the best thing that can happen to me or to any other. And so looked at the suffering ceases to be punishment, so far as that

This we believe but do not see.

The faith gives complete satisfaction

and it takes the sting from punishment

and from
suffering.

term carries with it any suggestion of harshness, arbitrariness, or vindictiveness, or even of a hard, external law without understanding and sympathy, and becomes a vehicle and channel not only of judgment but of grace and love. And when God's holy love is seen to be at work in judgment and in suffering, especially when in Christ God is seen also Himself to be suffering as well as judging, not only in this life but presumably also in the life that transcends our experience, then truly is the moral perplexity of sin and suffering in no small degree cleared. The conception of immortality and of life after death leaves room for God to follow up and work out completely the purposes of holy love, even through judgment, discipline, and suffering. And with this all the sting and virus of suffering is removed.

The faith is
in God's
justice and
truth

Our faith in this, as, ultimately, our faith in science and the seeming truth of the world, rests clearly and only on our belief in a God who will neither deceive nor wrong His children in the world He had made for them. We cannot prove this faith. We cannot rest it on any external authority. But without it we cannot prove anything else or find satisfaction in any other element of our experience. With it we see a satisfactory end to which our experience as a whole points. This after all is all we have. It is all we need. It is all we have a right to expect. In all our life-experience, especially in the deepest, most intimate, and most personal relationships and concerns, we live by

faith and hope, not by exact measurement and calculation.

So immortality does not change our argument, though it extends the scope of it. What we find good for eternity we find good also for this life, and, *vice versâ*, that on which we rely for our experience here we find good to rely on for that which lies beyond. Sin and suffering are incommensurable as we know them in this life. They may perhaps be so in whatever remains for us hereafter. But in our war against sin—that supreme moral obligation that lies on all men—suffering has its part to play, and on the whole a helpful and beneficent part, though painful. By means of it, perhaps, our greatest gains are won, and generally speaking the greater the gain the greater the cost. But also the greater the gain the less men count the cost, the more worth while it is to them. Eventually if men respond to the discipline of it, as Jesus seems to have done, they come to meet it and endure it not only with resignation but with something of welcome and of joy,—joy not in the suffering for its own sake but for what comes with it. For it has often proved to others, as to him, the special vehicle of God's choicest gifts to men, even the gift of salvation and redemption from the sin of the world and atonement with the mind and will of God in Christ Jesus. It has been a chosen and effectual means, a test, proof, and effectual manifestation of the supreme quality and work of God as seen in Christ, and therefore of the supreme quality and achieve-

which lapse
of time does
not affect.

In His hands
suffering is
source of gain.

ment of men. It would not naturally have occurred to us to choose this method, either the perplexity or the pain of it, but, being chosen for us, surely it has so far justified the choice if we look fairly at experience as a whole.

CHAPTER XI

Now that we have considered immortality and the conception of reward and punishment after this life in its bearing on the function of suffering and punishment in Atonement, and having reached some negative conclusions as to what Atonement has sometimes been thought to be but apparently is not, *i.e.* having seen reasons why we need not consider Christ's sufferings and death as penal or as necessary conditions, on God's side, of His forgiveness of man's sins, it remains to state positively what experience seems to suggest as to the way in which God's atonement does get effected, how He does in Christ reconcile the world to Himself, and what part suffering has in that most divine work.

The negative suggestions of experience.

Now pass to the positive.

There are three lines along which we can look for light from experience towards an understanding of the mind of God on this question.

Three lines :
(1) The world apart from man;

First, there is men's common experience of the constitution of the world in which they live, its order so far as it is not dependent on men's own action, the conditions within which men have developed, fixed for them. We call it Nature, the natural order, the general scheme of things,

(2) the laws of
moral human
progress ;

(3) the ideal
man and Son
of God.

constituting the material and the setting or framework of human life. This the Christian assumes is God's appointed order. There is no other source to which it can be attributed. From it we learn something of His mind. Second, the moral experience of man as we see him from time to time reaching higher ideals of goodness and striving to realise them in his life, individual and social. Lastly, the experience, so far as we can understand and reconstruct it out of such records as we have, of Jesus Christ, who looked upon himself and came to be looked upon by others as uniquely embodying in human flesh and blood both God and the ideal of man, towards which the good man has tended and striven, and by which both man and God may be known and judged.

God's order of
nature.

God's moral
order of the
world.

The first two lines we have already followed, more or less, so far as our consideration of the functions of suffering and punishment, and of the nature, need, and means of Atonement, has required. We have seen what seems to be the working of the will of God in the natural order of the world, working with all the precision, impartiality, and inevitability of the Laws of Nature, in eternal sequence of cause and effect. Within this order man lives. Gradually he comes to know it, and by understanding of and obedience to its laws is able to make use of it for his purposes and attains something of freedom and well-being. We have seen also the working of the will of God in the moral order of the world. There He has set His holy law, the law of His nature, the law of His

ideal for man, which has been gradually unfolding itself, always beyond men, always beckoning men on, high, commanding, admitting no compromise. Here too there is something of the precision, impartiality, and inevitability of the Laws of Nature, a natural sequence of moral order and disorder. Within this order also man lives, and so far as he comes to understanding of the ideal and obedience to the claim it makes on him so far he attains moral freedom and well-being of spirit. And just as ignorance, carelessness, or defiance of the natural order and its laws lead to physical suffering and disorder, so also in the moral and spiritual order ignorance, carelessness, or defiance of the moral laws lead to moral and spiritual disorder and suffering, which also shows itself in the physical sphere.

And so with the moral ideal and its claim on men there goes also what may be called the natural law of sin, which is illustrated as man meets this ideal and is weak before it, often rejecting the light as it comes to him, refusing allegiance. And this law too works inexorably. Sin breeds sin, involves alienation from goodness, enmity, disorganisation, wretchedness, in every soul that harbours it, and, sooner or later, disorganisation and wretchedness in the outer life both of the individual and of society.

There is also the law of suffering, a natural law, fixed and unalterable. But though the moral law involves suffering the two laws are different, working each on its own lines. Though suffering

is painful, even *because* it is painful, it works in human experience on the whole beneficently, guiding, warning, checking, turning men from things and acts dangerous to life, turning men from sin, stimulating them to best efforts of mind and will, and testing and confirming them therein.

The whole
order is good,

proved by
experience.

It is deliberate,
not a makeshift;

founded on
God's goodness
and man's
freedom.

But beside
working
through Law,

And all this order, these laws combined, are part of the natural order in which men live, given to them, arranged for them. And, taking the laws together, as a whole it is a good order, a moral order. Within it and by means of it, as man has met it with courage and good will, all human knowledge has been won, all human happiness experienced, all human love and goodness attained. And this order shows no signs of having been adopted, as some human laws have been, under pressure of unforeseen emergencies, with some element of temporary experiment and failure about it. It has been constant. It seems to reflect God's deliberate wisdom and holy love expressing itself in His relation to the ideal to which He calls man and in His relation to man's sin. It is eternal, and abides so long as God is holy and man is free. It is essentially bound up with these qualities.

But happily, as Christians believe, God did not and does not confine His activity to the maintaining of the general scheme of things, the natural laws, the moral law, the conditions within which man lived and ran his course. Not only in and through this order, but ever and everywhere, behind the 'mills of God,' has the tireless energy

of holy love worked, warning, teaching, drawing men as they were willing and able to learn.

At last in the fulness of time He sent His Son within these conditions, subject to this order, to pass with men through these mills, fulfilling in human flesh and blood the ideal of God's holy love and His ideal and purpose for man.

God sent Christ to live within it.

It remains for us to see what light we can get on our questions of suffering, punishment, and atonement from a general view of Jesus' life and teaching. And it is obvious that it must be a general view. Our aim is philosophical, *i.e.* concerned with broad lines and truth of perspective, and our method is empirical, *i.e.* working along lines of common experience. Our argument must not depend on the authority of particular books or passages, about which there might be dispute. We can therefore here use only such features of Jesus' life and teaching as will be accepted by any candid mind reading the Gospels and assuming them to contain an authentic story of a real historical personage.

What of Christ's experience of suffering

from the point of view of empirical philosophy?

How then can we understand Jesus to have suffered? and what does our enquiry into the nature of suffering suggest as to the significance of his suffering? We enter upon the question with utmost reverence.

Jesus suffered pain of body in life and in death. This could not but be, if he was a real man. As incarnate he entered into mortal man's common heritage of pain and death, and suffered according

Jesus and bodily pain.

to the common laws of nature. He may have suffered through his life less pain of body than falls to many. At any rate no excesses will have injured his health. We read of weariness and hunger, but not of accident or disease. Presumably in life pain will have performed the same functions for him as for other men.

He took it, we may imagine, as it came, not insensibly. Except as in the way of nature, when, for instance, pains of hunger and weariness, experienced or anticipated, warn a man to eat and rest, there is no reason to suppose that he especially either sought pain or avoided it. He was master of his body. Its pleasure and pain alike had with him their due weight, their function in the natural order; but as compared with the call of duty and of love they had no weight at all. They had their place and were kept there. No bodily pain or pleasure, much or little, could turn him from his path of duty or purpose of love.

Bodily pain
in death.

Death, apparently, he did not court. He seems to have kept deliberately out of the way of it till he was conscious his hour was come, and then he met it without haste but without hesitation. He went to his death in normal vigour of body, so far as we know. Of the actual bodily pain of crucifixion and death the two malefactors crucified with him may have suffered more, or they may have suffered less. We can't tell. It is irrelevant.

The pains of
others.

To the pains of others he was sensitive. As the sick came to him, or were brought by others, he felt for them and would spend himself in relieving

them and healing them. On occasion, when other resources were lacking, he exerted himself to feed the hungry. And all this quite freely, not anxiously. He was concerned with men's bodily needs directly and not simply as a means of leverage for spiritual ends. At the same time we feel sure his concern for spiritual healing and good was greater still. He said as much. Much pain he had to leave unrelieved. This also without apparent anxiety.

Of suffering in the wider sense he knew much, His sufferings of mind doubtless. But here, too, many of the things that trouble other men's minds he was free from. We imagine him free as the fowls of the air from carking care for the future either for himself or for others: he knew his Father cared for all these things. And his joy in the beauty and goodness of God's world, in human love and innocence and goodness, his joy also in what good he was able to do and what of triumph he saw before him, was doubtless great.

Even in the presence of death he can hardly have suffered as many do. He was too sure of God. And he had no fear. Yet he did suffer, in sympathy with others who were troubled in mind, largely sympathetic. and doubtless spent himself in comforting them.

But we can hardly be wrong in thinking that His great sorrow due to men's sin apart from his sympathetic entering into the sorrows of others the sorrow that most weighed upon him was due to men's sin as he saw it work out in their lives and as it gradually gathered and concentrated its forces to oppose him and his

and the
consequent
judgment
on them.

purposes of love. Wounded in the house of his friends, he seems to have felt grow upon him the sorrow that those who were his own received him not, rejected the light, would not have life. He saw them set in the ways of wrong, even the more because of his coming, and he knew the doom that must ensue. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." Even of his chosen band one sold him for money to his foes, and the others could neither understand him nor watch with him. At the critical hour of human need they all forsook him and fled.

His suffering
is unique

Here verily is room for suffering enough. Gethsemane is witness, and Calvary. No wonder men have felt the words of Isaiah liii, and of Lamentations i. 12: "Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow," come inevitably and appropriately to their mind in thinking of those hours of suffering.

for his
sensitiveness
was unique.

But when men have drawn systems of theology and ethical principles out of their interpretations of certain facts and descriptive phrases, one must look honestly at the facts if one is to be assured of the justice of the phrases and the interpretations. This sufferer has a sensitiveness of spirit, a power of entering into the meaning of the crisis, for himself and for others, beyond other men.

And that means a power of suffering beyond other men. But he is not less brave than others. If we put aside the cry of desolation in the words of Psalm xxii. his faith in the Father is clear and strong even on the Cross, and he has leisure of mind to think for those at his side and round his feet. We are reminded that others, men with less knowledge of God, have met death, even a death bitter with disappointment of high hopes, and met it bravely. What marks off this death from all others is not the quantity of suffering—if suffering is at all so measurable—but the quality of the sufferer. If he suffered more it was because he was the incarnation of holiness and love. Holy, he felt as none other could the sin of men, and all that it was of contradiction and of sorrow to the Holy Father. Loving to the end, he knew the wounds of love, the curse and mischief of sin to men. This is in the nature of things. It is ever holy love that suffers most from the sin of the loved. It knows the mischief more, it feels the alienation, the contradiction, and the misery more. It loves more. It hates more. The concentrated passion of pure love in conflict with evil at its worst might well break the human heart. In many another man and woman the strain of emotion, both of joy and of sorrow, of pain and of conflict, however different in quality from his, has been in amount and intensity too great for the human organism. And so, whatever the physical cause and process, presumably along the line of natural causes, death came to relieve the racked

Holy love
meeting sin
must suffer.

The conflict
too strong for
the body.

nerve. The Saviour died, by the hand of wicked men.

The virtue of the death is independent of the manner of it.

But if the virtue of the atoning death of Christ seems not to lie in the amount of suffering endured, either of body or of mind, as men have sometimes liked to think of it, so neither does it seem to lie in the manner of it. If we ask—as ask we must, in no idle academic curiosity of thought but for the most serious purpose of understanding, so far as we may, God's ways with men, and of separating the accidental from the essential in the central moral act of history,—if we ask whether the death would have occurred and would have had the same moral value and atoning virtue apart from the violent form that the wickedness of the men concerned in it actually did give it, again we can only interrogate our experience. Sometimes nothing is more futile than to let the imagination play upon 'what might have been,' and in a sense nothing in history is accidental. But it would be strange indeed if the essence and virtue of so great an act of God depended on the strength or weakness of any individual men or the manners and form of government of any people. If in Palestine 'in the days of his flesh' the Jews had been wiser or more tolerant, if his friends had been more numerous or more courageous, if Pilate had been stronger or more just, then humanly speaking, the circumstances of his death would perhaps have been very different. The pathway to it might well have been longer and smoother. The startling dramatic

Other circumstances might have made it less startling,

development of the contradiction and conflict with sin, written large on the Cross for all the world to see, might well have been lacking. And perhaps there was some real advantage to his purpose in this more spectacular element.

But this element may quite possibly weigh unduly in our thought, and the difference between then and now may be too much taken for granted. If the crucifixion on Calvary is to us a startling tragedy of sin and cruelty it was not so to the casual observer of that day. Miscarriages of justice were not infrequent. Crosses must have been a common sight. There were three that day outside that city wall. And to the great world then, even to many there, there was nothing calling for much remark about it. And to-day, in this age of seeming milder culture and widely diffused Christian sentiment, knowing the force of militarist temper in times of national excitement, we can be by no means sure that had he grown up in one of our Christian countries he would not have met his death at the hands of some strong well-meaning government or of an excited crowd in a way not essentially different from that of his actual experience in Jerusalem nearly nineteen hundred years ago. Of one thing at least we are sure. There was in him no fear, no hesitation, no compromise with evil, with sin. As he went his way, his appointed way of love and holiness, healing man's sorrows and doing battle against their sins, without respect of persons, he could not but be ever a challenge both to sin and to virtue, revealing

though it startled then less than it does now,

and perhaps our circumstances are not so different as they seem.

The essential antagonism belongs to him as such.

The forces of
evil cannot
ignore him.

the thoughts of many hearts, doubtless often to their own surprise and confusion. While humble goodness would recognise and rejoice in him, sin also, the evil will, would know him and fasten upon him. It could not be indifferent to him. He is its perpetual revelation and contradiction, its judgment and its reproach. In any age, whatever its type of culture, his absolute moral antagonism to sin in all its forms could hardly fail to bring him into deadly conflict, even of external action and passion, with the powers of evil in the world.

But death
naturally
follows life.

Yet it must be granted, the time and manner of his death might have been different. He would not, however, so far as our experience suggests, any the less for that have met and suffered death. Bodily life under human conditions leads to bodily death, whether the process be long or short, smooth or painful, 'natural' or violent. It needs must be so, miracle apart. It is part of the order of things which the Father had judged most proper to man and His purpose for them. It was a good order, not to be broken without weakening it. It was good, for all men ; good therefore for the Son of Man. Having once for good reason, for love's sake, for the sake of the Father's holy purpose of love for His other children, entered into the order he could hardly break out of it and still *be* their brother, the first-born among many brethren. He must go through with it. Whatever powers he had—and we are not concerned here with the

Part of God's
good order
of nature.

question of miracle—they must be used within the system of law, the nature of things, within which his brethren had to live and die, if superhuman and divine yet human, if supernatural yet in a sense natural, powers accessible to him as man, powers of God mediated through man. A miracle saving him from death would perhaps have been a seven days' wonder, but it is open to us to question (still along the lines of actual experience) whether his purpose would have been furthered thereby as compared with what actually has happened.

Miraculous escape would hardly have helped.

So it would seem not strange that Jesus, the Prince of life, should have died. The difficulty is to imagine it otherwise, human life being what it is. And, apart from assumptions which have little connection with experience, we have as little reason to look upon his death as punishment for sin as we have to attribute the death of all God's creatures to that same cause. We know that men still put a fellow man to death for certain offences against their laws, but that only affects the time and manner of his death. Death itself is part of God's order of things and has presumably other explanations. So far as our experience suggests, it has prevailed throughout the history of the world. Jesus' death was, it would seem, in that natural order, simply not an exception.

Christ's death therefore was normal,

not punishment.

And as, from the point of view of human experience taken broadly, apart from men's own use of suffering and death as punishment, it is difficult to see how the death of Christ can be

Death did not make forgiveness possible or moral,

though it
made
repentance
easier.

Suffering
and sin still
incommensur-
able.

Bodily death
does not affect
the eternal
spiritual order.

understood as punishment, so it is difficult to see how the death can have made it easier on God's part, *i.e.* more morally right, more just, to forgive men's sin. Doubtless on man's part it has again and again operated powerfully to induce and to deepen repentance and faith in God and in His love and goodness, and so to produce the human condition of forgiveness. But suffering and sin would seem to be still incommensurable, working along different lines, on different planes. No suffering, not even death, is in any essential way an equivalent for sin, cannot therefore cancel it. So far as our experience goes, suffering and physical death do not of themselves necessarily affect the moral order. The moral order, which is the spiritual order, manifests itself in the physical order and is so connected with it, affects it, but is not determined by it. The two are still essentially different.

Even the bodily death of Christ, while it is the manifestation in the physical plane of something all-important in the spiritual world, would not seem to be itself the effective thing, does not itself reverse or alter the moral and spiritual order. What was possible in the spiritual order of the world after the death was possible also before it, so far as God's essential being and action were concerned. So far as our experience guides us, therefore, when man repented of his sin, and so far as he repented, God forgave, before the Crucifixion and after it,—is it too much to say, irrespective of it?

CHAPTER XII

WE have now only one more source to interrogate. What is Jesus' own attitude? What of Jesus himself and his own attitude in this matter of forgiveness? We have only fragmentary records. From mere absence of evidence to prove a doctrine we can infer nothing as to the truth of the doctrine. He left many things to be taught and learnt afterwards, and has ever been teaching and guiding his people. But at any rate his own words and deeds that we have left to us in the records are significant of much. The general impression left has these relevant features.

Jesus' first public prophetic word to men seems His insistence on repentance, to have been a call to repentance. His sorrow to the end was that they would not repent. They preferred the darkness. In the early Galilaean ministry he announced clearly his own reading of the law. He didn't abolish law. on law. In the instances he gives, *e.g.* murder, adultery, false swearing, alms, prayer, fasting, he only makes law more searching, more inward, more spiritual and thorough. The sanctions are if anything more terrible, the issues more clear and serious, man's responsibility greater with the coming of new light. The last excuse is gone. His scathing condemnations. Nothing can exceed the scathing nature

of his condemnations. To some of the most religious people of his day he said : " Ye serpents, ye offspring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgment of hell ? " All the way through apparently, to him, law reigns, in the spiritual world as in the physical. At the end, as he sees it, every man will be judged with absolute discrimination according to his deeds. What is sown is reaped. Better for a man to have a great mill-stone hanged about his neck and be sunk in the depth of the sea than to cause one of the little ones believing on him to stumble. There is no weakening of the moral law in Jesus' hands. 'To the uttermost farthing,' all is as certain and inevitable as a scientific law of nature.

Moral law
fixed as law
of nature.

But Jesus is not
legalistic and
punitive.

And yet, with all this, nothing could be further from the legal, or rather the hard, pettily scrupulous and punitive, attitude towards the sinner than the whole temper of Jesus as shewn in his sayings and doings. His stories of the Two Debtors and of the Unmerciful Servant must not be pressed, of course, in details any more than other parables, but they do seem to express something in his mind that is characteristic. The debt of 500 pence is as frankly forgiven as the 50. Even the 10,000 talents are of no more consideration than the 100 pence. *They* do not stand between the lord and his servant when the willingness but inability to pay is pleaded. The one barrier is the man's own deliberate will. But that barrier is effectual. Having received mercy free and generous, having

The two
parables about
debtors

shew his
generosity

had his eyes opened to the glory of mercy and generosity, the man prefers to be merciless and exacting. With that spirit there can be no union, and his sternness. no reconciliation. 'If ye forgive not men their trespasses neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.' That spirit has other treatment due—and gets it. We can only hope that as the grip of the law closes on him he may in all sincerity repent, change his mind.

The impression left by Jesus' own acts is similar to that of the parables. He met sinners of all sorts, of all degrees of sinfulness, the self-righteous Pharisee, the publican Zacchaeus, the Samaritan woman, the woman who was a sinner, the adulteress, the thief on the cross, and so on, and his withering severity on one type is as striking as his astonishing readiness to forgive the others. Something of genuine repentance, desire for better things, something of belief in himself, acceptance of his judgment, seem to be the only necessary conditions of forgiveness. Light has come, he seems to feel, he forgives freely healing for the body, and healing, forgiveness, for the soul is accessible if men want it, if they will have it, freely. The difficulty was that for various reasons many of them didn't want it—the light was unwelcome. They really wanted something quite different, something exclusive, a superiority, something that glorified *them*. They had their own idea of God and His law. It was their special and exclusive glory, to which they had a sort of loyalty. But their idea was not Christ's idea. and so does God. and condemns unsparingly,

So must man.

God's gifts were free and universal as the sun and the rain. Men too should be as free and generous. Not seven times only, but seventy and seven times they should forgive, if the offender turned and repented. The danger of the Pharisees was not that they might repent and find they had outworn God's patience and readiness to forgive, but that while they kept that temper, that state of mind, that view of things, they never would repent. In all his dealings with sinners he seems singularly little concerned with the past. That presents no obstacle. He takes men as he finds them and the one question is, now their chance has come and the light is here, what will they do with it? His forgiveness has no hint of reserve. Is there any trace of a consciousness that the Father's forgiveness would be different, any less free?

Unconcern
with the past.

The conditions
of forgiveness
repentance
towards God,

forgiveness to
men.

Yet, free as it is, forgiveness is not unconditional. The condition or conditions are absolute—Repentance, change of mind with regard to the sin, the will to turn from it, and, what is the same thing looked at from the other point of view, change of mind towards God and His holy law so far as it is known, the will to turn to Him. And the evidence of this changed will is a new attitude towards other men, his brethren, the kind forgiving spirit. Without these conditions, or this condition—for it is one indivisible quality of mind and will, affecting every act inner and outer,—God's forgiveness, reconciliation, oneness with Him, harmony with Him, is absolutely im-

possible. About this Jesus is most explicit and emphatic.

There is nothing weak, sentimental, pithless, No weak sentiment. enervating, easygoing, no undermining of the moral law, about this free forgiveness. It is all within a system of law, the natural law of the physical world, the moral law of sin and judgment and righteousness, eternal, inviolable, terrible, glorious. Law is supreme Every act of the spirit of man has its weight, has its effects, on the spirit itself, on others. To neglect the light is fatal. The mischief of sin and the misery of its consequences are incalculable, but inevitable and abiding. It is still man's wisdom to flee from the wrath to come. For the wrath and terrible. is there. God is ever at war with sin. The mills of God grind slowly but they grind exceeding small. If there is truth in this aspect of punishment and atonement it in no way tends to do away with law and judgment in the moral and religious world. It tends rather to relieve the mind where an element of arbitrariness, of doubtful law and justice, in the theoretical region transcending human experience, has often troubled the mind and conscience.

So long as it can be assumed—and apparently The older orthodox assumptions it has often been easily assumed—that God's justice had decreed that at the moment of death the human soul should pass immediately from its state of probation to a fixed and unalterable condition either of eternal bliss in heaven or of eternal and absolute misery in hell, according to what it

made the
older theory
of atonement
satisfactory.

The moral
result was
reached

has done or what it has believed, or both ; and so long as it seems reasonable that guilt and penalty are separable from the sinful will which gives rise to them, and are transferable by legal process from one person to another ; so long may it be clear and reasonable enough that the sufferings and death of the Son of God, infinite in quantity and in value because he was the eternal Son of God, were by the mystery of godliness a bearing of the condemnation and eternal penalty of sin, and that Christ saved the believer from this condemnation and eternal penalty of sin by taking it upon himself, guilt and punishment together, cancelling the guilt by the punishment, and so enabled God, with full satisfaction to His justice, to forgive men, and, because of Christ's merits, reward them with heaven instead of punishing them with hell. And the result has often been satisfactory enough, a real reconciliation. The human spirit, conscious of sin and alienation, rightly fearful of the consequences, cannot but be profoundly moved by the love of God so displayed in Christ. In proportion as a man realises the dread alternative, the freedom and the completeness of the sacrifice, and the grace of forgiveness thereby released, he must in adoring gratitude give, with belief in the fact, that loyalty which is the due response of love to grace so unmerited, so costly.

and men saved
from sin.

In varying degrees and in various ways something like this has happened with countless hosts of Christian souls. Repentance and reconciliation

have been complete, the barrier of sin has been removed. God's holy love has come with saving power into men's hearts, triumphing over sin. Whatever the avenue of thought traversed, whatever the explanation given to the mind, the desired end, the change of will, has been reached.

But to many loyal Christian souls, whose repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is undoubted, and to many others who sincerely desire to believe in Christ, if they can do so with intellectual honesty, some of these assumptions are no longer easy, some even are impossible. With different conceptions of personality in God and man, different ideas as to the meaning of law, of sin, righteousness, and judgment, of pains, penalties, and salvation,—the very things with which Atonement is concerned,—the mind may be expected to travel through different avenues of thought, give different explanations to itself, as to how Atonement is reached, especially that Godward side of it which lies necessarily outside human experience, about which we have no one complete and authoritative statement.

There may well be many avenues of thought throwing light on the desired experience and the reciprocal spiritual acts which constitute Atonement. The present empirical argument is a search for light along one such avenue, that of common moral experience. It has no negative purpose. If the results so far reached have been stated in a negative way they do but bring out more clearly

Changed assumptions lead to changed theories.

Among many avenues of thought

that of common experience should be useful.

The argument is not negative.

the positive fact which is the fundamental substance, the centre and source, of every true thought of Atonement, *i.e.*, the eternal, unresting, unconquerable energy of God's holy love, most fully manifested and in the human sphere most victoriously active in Jesus Christ, with its infinite patience and pity for men's ignorance and weakness, its absolute opposition to men's sin. If the discussion tends to do away with the separation between the justice and the love of God, if it tends to remove from our conception of His justice and His dealing with sin and sinners anything that seems to savour of unreality or of arbitrariness, anything that suggests lack of proportion or want of discrimination, any harsh inclusion of human imperfection and of human sin in a common condemnation and a common doom, the positive gain will be considerable and welcome. If common experience deals less with 'imputation,' either of trespasses or of righteousness, it is no less concerned with the realities of them in the hearts and lives of men, and with God's eternal judgment of them. If there is less counting of sufferings and less account taken of physical death it is not from lack of sensitiveness and tenderness of love but from conviction of the eternal nature and absolute value of holiness, in God and in man. If it has less to say of penalties remitted it has no less of sin conquered. If it is concerned less with the cancelling of the past, it stands for the radical changing of the present and the securing, at all cost, of the future. It looks for its satisfaction less to a

So far as it
seems negative
it has positive
purpose,

eliminated
elements and
positive.

change in divine judgment than to a divinely changed humanity, less to a new reckoning than to a new creation, not so much to new credit in the ledger as to the pouring of a new health and wealth into the spiritual and moral life of man. And this is what stands out in the positive empirical reading of Christ's work in his life and teaching and death, in a word in his Atonement.

In accordance with the holy will and redeeming love of God, which had ever been enlightening, disciplining, and drawing men, the full and adequate word of God became flesh and dwelt among us. He came, not as the *deux ex machina* in a drama to unravel a faultily constructed plot, not essentially as the suffering victim to resolve a juridical tangle otherwise the despair of justice, not mainly to satisfy by his death a penal law which was still weak as any human law to make men good, which could crush but could not make alive. Rather did he come in due time, that is, at the earliest time when love could effectually fulfil its holy ends, to complete the purpose of creation and the story of redemption. He came to unmask evil, to judge and overcome it in its seat in the hearts and wills of men. He came to exhibit in action God's perfect law of love and holiness, satisfying even God's hunger and thirst after righteousness in man, potent to stir even in the most degraded and sinful of men a holy passion for the same.

And he did this in human flesh, living as a man should live, dying as a man must,—for the one

Positive
statement of
work of Christ

and of his
death.

involves the other, and to human experience and to human thought no man's experience is complete as no man's life is finished till he has met death and gone through it. Many even ordinary men can meet death fearlessly, but it is no small factor in man's life and thought. It is the last test of the strength and freedom that his mind has won.

The
willingness of
it all.

But Jesus went willingly to his death, not only as many do every day, because they must. As he chose willingly to enter upon life under human conditions so he chose willingly to lay down his life under these same conditions. He would avoid no pain, no conflict in life, that his brethren had to meet. It would have been easy to do so. He might perhaps have avoided the last pain, the last conflict of body and spirit in death, but he would not. Where his holy love of God and of man, his conflict to the end against evil, led him he went obedient to the Father's will. Having loved his own which were in the world he loved them unto the end. And the end sealed the whole, without it the whole would not have been completed. It has been said that Catholic theology emphasises the Incarnation and Protestant theology the death of Christ as elements in the Atonement. Are they not rather inseparable parts of one indivisible fact or act of God in history ?

Life and death
both parts of
whole work of
atonement.

Death did not
end the work
of Christ,

The supreme act of God in history was not completed even with the death of Christ. The Christian belief is that He raised up Christ from the dead, that death could not hold this conqueror

of sin. And those who believed this resurrection had their faith in Christ as the Son of God thereby restored and confirmed, shaken as it had been by the Crucifixion; and a new spirit came upon them, a spirit of holiness and love and also a spirit of illumination and of power like his, in which they went forth conquering and to conquer.

But what happened after did not alter, had no need to alter, or even add to, what had been done; rather has it seemed to Christian faith to follow in natural sequence, in God's world, from the character of what Christ had done. With Christ's death his work of reconciliation, so far as it was his objective act in the external order, was complete. That perfect offering of a spirit obedient even unto death, manifesting in human flesh and blood among its fellows an entirely holy love, which satisfied God's holy law and embodied his ideal for man, *that* it was which should redeem from their sin all hearts willing to receive and adopt it and should unite them to God in mutual interchange of love, of grace and of loyalty,—and *that* was once and for all done.

As Paul put it ¹: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled in

but completed
the work of
reconciliation.

¹ Rom. viii. 1-9.

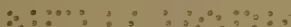
us, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit. . . . For the mind of the flesh is death ; but the mind of the spirit is life and peace : because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God ; for it is not subject to the law of God. . . . But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you."

The cost was
great,

And the price of all this reconciliation, forgiveness, salvation ? Did Jesus not die for us ? Has he not redeemed us by his blood ? Yes, most assuredly. We are not our own, we are bought with a price. If there ever was a time when this thought seemed to have little meaning and did not move us it will not be now, when the dullest mind realises how countless lives are being given for us day by day—in different fashion and of different quality, as the givers themselves would be the first to say, but the giving is real and the redemption should be real so far as it goes, and the cost is high. But perhaps this very fact makes it clearer than ever that in such giving 'price,' even 'ransom,' in the strict sense of the words and with all the implications of the words, all exact counting of debts and weighing of sufferings, is impossible and irrelevant. Were it not so we should have to ask, Who requires the price, and to whom is it paid ? And as soon as the question is asked it is clear there is no answer. There theology has always stuck fast. Love gives, love pays, and, above all, holy love in this world suffers and must suffer. We can only be thankful that it does, and that for the value of the end

but 'price' is
unthinkable.

sought; it counts not the cost. It is this, if anything in the world, that begets its like in the hearts of men, makes dull, hard, and rebellious hearts able to feel, ready to suffer, eager to give themselves in similar fashion for all the purposes of holy love. This *is* the Holy Spirit of God in Christ, in which man by the work of God in Christ is brought to share. This *is* atonement.



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